

Food for thoughts-Commentaries on Articles from Hindu Daily:

[Why the Lord takes incarnations](#) Tue, 30 Mar 1999 13:33:35 -0500
[Significance of Haj pilgrimage](#)
[Desire increases with every gain](#)
[Unique incarnation of the Almighty](#) Fri, 19 Mar 1999 12:36:57 -0500
[God pardons the faults of His devotees](#)
[The Self, source of eternal bliss](#)
[The three 'Ds' one should observe](#) Tue, 16 Mar 1999 12:35:13 -0500
[Man's action should be in pursuit of God](#)
[Nature of the Lord's incarnations](#)
[Desire, cause of all human problems](#) Fri, 12 Mar 1999 12:23:36 -0500
[Saint who sang the glory of Rama](#)
[Three ways open for human beings](#)
[Concepts of joy and sorrow](#) Tue, 9 Mar 1999 12:47:45 -0500
[Saint who preached spiritual humanism](#)
[Rama never deviated from path of virtue](#)
[Selfless service helps one get God's grace](#) Fri, 5 Mar 1999 12:17:41 -0500
[Religion can make one's mind steady](#)
[Characteristics of a true devotee](#) Fri, Mar. 05,'99
[Wisdom alone can liberate man](#) Tue, 2 Mar 1999 12:57:12 -0500
[Chaitanya, savior of mankind](#)
[Providence cannot be thwarted](#) Fri, 26 Feb 1999 08:12:08 -0500
[The Self, source of infinite bliss](#)
[Dedicate all actions to the Almighty](#) Tue, 23 Feb 1999 12:46:35 -0500
[Mind should be kept under control](#) Mon, 22 Feb 1999 12:56:50 -0500
[God-realization is goal of human life](#) Friday, February 19, 1999 4:03 PM
[Supreme Being, the first Tue.](#) 16 Feb 1999 11:44:12 -0500
[Surrender, easy means to liberation](#) Mon, 15 Feb 1999 13:16:07 -0500
[Renunciation, key to true happiness](#) Fri, 12 Feb 1999 12:15:29 -0500
[Devotion to God, an end in itself](#) Thu, 11 Feb 1999 12:35:09 -0500
[Moral order can never be destroyed](#) Wed, 10 Feb 1999 12:33:55 -0500
[Piety, an excellent human quality](#) Mon, 8 Feb 1999 13:02:34 -0500
[Prayers help mitigate one's sufferings](#) Fri, 5 Feb 1999 13:15:23 -0500
[Devotion to Lord, not a barren ritual.](#) Wed, 3 Feb 1999 12:50:42 –
[Prerequisites of spiritual life](#) Fri, 15 Jan 1999 13:10:15 -0500
[Service to God, goal of human life](#) Thu, 14 Jan 1999 07:55:53 -0500
[Almighty's grace, unconditional](#) Wed, 13 Jan 1999 13:38:02 -0500
[Righteousness must be upheld always](#) Tue, 12 Jan 1999 12:14:23 -0500
[All events take place as per God's will](#) Sat, 9 Jan 1999 13:46:27 -0500
[God keen to reform erring individuals](#) Fri, 8 Jan 1999 12:22:42 -0500
[An embodiment of true devotion](#) Thu, 7 Jan 1999 12:17:49 -0500
[Guru' who stood for national unity](#) Tue, 5 Jan 1999 15:52:16 -0500
[Surrender to God must be absolute](#) Mon, 4 Jan 1999 12:41:56 -0500
[Scriptures lay stress on duty, discipline](#) Fri, 25 Dec 1998 21:54:29 -0500
[A gift given by God](#) Thu, 24 Dec 1998 20:13:54 -0500

[The means to secure divine grace](#) Wed, 23 Dec 1998 18:16:23 -0500
[Chanting mantras requires discipline](#) Tue, 22 Dec 1998 19:24:15 -0500
[Ways to receive Lord's blessings](#) Mon, 21 Dec 1998 18:31:08 -0500'
[Act with sense of responsibility](#) Sat, 19 Dec 1998 11:25:20 -0500
[Uphold truth as the greatest penance](#) Fri, 18 Dec 1998 12:08:55 -0500
[Transforming power of God's grace](#) Thu, 17 Dec 1998 07:26:08 -0500
[Ego, an illusion of the mind](#) Wed, 16 Dec 1998 12:22:37 -0500
[Man must discharge his duties](#) Tue, 15 Dec 1998 12:40:33 -0500
[Hard work, must to get Divine grace](#) Mon, 14 Dec 1998 12:22:20 -0500
[Need to observe moral injunctions](#) Sat, 12 Dec 1998 13:36:20 -0500
[Realized souls see God everywhere](#) Fri, 11 Dec 1998 12:11:03 -0500
[Craving for worldly objects is a sin –Questions](#) Thu, 10 Dec 1998 10:55:53 -0500
[Craving for worldly objects is a sin](#) Thu, 10 Dec 1998 09:12:46 -0500
[Questions –Upvas and cheating](#)
[Religion helps one lead peaceful life](#) Wed, 9 Dec 1998 08:25:46 -0500
[Religious rites linked with Nature](#) Tue, 8 Dec 1998 12:44:12 -0500
[God won't ask](#) Tue, 8 Dec 1998 08:02:45 -0500
[Infinite compassion of the Almighty](#) Monday, 7 Dec 1998 12:17:51 -0500
[Knowledge alone can liberate man](#) Saturday Dec. 05, 1998
[Providence cannot be thwarted](#) Fri, 4 Dec 1998 12:37:02 -0500
[Human birth, not accidental](#) Thu, 3 Dec 1998 12:10:36 -0500
[Efficacy of chanting the Divine name](#) Wed, 2 Dec 1998 12:40:16 -0500
[Bondage, result of man's ignorance](#) Tue, 1 Dec 1998 12:38:19 -0500
[Preceptors show path to God's empire](#) Mon, 30 Nov 1998 12:09:37 -0500
[Mother's supreme love for children](#) Fri, 27 Nov 1998 19:43:32 -0500
[Mother's supreme love for children](#) Fri, 27 Nov 1998 19:43:32 -0500
[Six real, unfailling relations of man](#) Wed, 25 Nov 1998 11:32:32 -0500
[Greatness of the votaries of the Lord](#) Tue, 24 Nov 1998 12:13:53 -0500
[Man must actualize his divine nature](#) Mon, 23 Nov 1998 15:55:30 -0500
[Cultivate devotion](#) Sat, 21 Nov 1998 17:20:02 -0500
[The Self, eternal in nature](#) Fri, 20 Nov 1998 14:31:14 -0500
[Dedicate all actions to the Lord](#) Wed, 18 Nov 1998 11:55:18 -0500
[Remember God in daily life](#) Tue, 17 Nov 1998 11:58:57 -0500
[Evolution theory and Avataras](#) Monday, November 16, 1998
[Reaching God through music](#) Mon, 16 Nov 1998 08:29:34 -0500
[Anger, chief enemy of mankind](#) Friday, November 13, 1998 12:40 PM
[Requisites of an ethical life](#) Mon, 9 Nov 1998 07:57:58 -0500
[Discharge of duties obligatory](#) Sat, 7 Nov 1998 08:10:05 -0500
[A perennial source of inspiration](#) Fri, 6 Nov 1998 12:10:50 -0500
[Promoter of universal brotherhood](#) Thu, 5 Nov 1998 12:18:02 -0500
[The philosophical part of the scriptures](#) Wed, 4 Nov 1998 12:14:10 -0500
[The seeming paradox of spiritual life](#) Tue, 3 Nov 1998 12:12:41 -0500
[Vedas common to all people](#) Mon, 2 Nov 1998 12:14:21 -0500
[God stands by those who seek His grace](#) Sat, 31 Oct 1998 18:28:08 -0500
[Company of holy men makes one perfect](#) Fri, 30 Oct 1998 13:07:48 -0500
[Noble traditions must be safeguarded](#) Thu, 29 Oct 1998 15:25:29 -0500

Saint's message of love Oct. 28,'98
A valuable guide for human excellence Thu, 29 Oct 1998 13:56:45 -0500
Humility helps one obey Divine Will Wed, 30 Sep 1998 08:16:44 -0500
Adherence to rules pleases God Mon, 28 Sep 1998 21:02:03 -0500
Worship of the Divine Mother Sun, 27 Sep 1998 17:02:18 -0500
Discharge duty at all costs Sat, 26 Sep 1998 07:43:58 -0500
The dynamic aspect of the Almighty Thu, 24 Sep 1998 20:18:22 -0500
Creation, subject to the flux of time Wed, 23 Sep 1998 20:10:01 -0500
Liberation, goal of human life Wed, 23 Sep 1998 12:15:43 -0500
Seeking the company of holy men Mon, 21 Sep 1998 13:35:14 -0500
Prahlada's deep devotion to Lord Fri, 18 Sep 1998 10:49:04 -0500
God guides those attached to Him Thu, 17 Sep 1998 08:43:24 -0500
Love for Sri Krishna is the ultimate goal Wed, 16 Sep 1998 12:15:39 -0500
Service to devotees pleases the Lord Tue, 15 Sep 1998 08:22:18 -0500
Unconditional nature of Divine grace Mon, 14 Sep 1998 11:23:35 -0500
Guru's grace essential for realizing God Sat, 12 Sep 1998 17:36:11 -0500
Eulogy on the Lord and His devotee Fri, 11 Sep 1998 12:19:39 -0500
Ignorance, cause of man's sorrows Thu, 10 Sep 1998 12:16:50 -0500
Merit of prostrating before devotees Tue, 8 Sep 1998 12:27:26 -0500
God's generosity is bounteous Mon, 7 Sep 1998 19:06:58 -0500
Bhishma, 'a man of terrible vow' Sat, 5 Sep 1998 07:36:03 -0500
Four stages of human life Fri, 4 Sep 1998 12:12:42 -0500
Ramayana stands for noble values Thu, 3 Sep 1998 19:07:37 -0500
Religion helps one lead blissful life Wed, 2 Sep 1998 11:52:21 -0500

Food for thoughts

Tue, 30 Mar 1999 13:33:35 -0500

The following articles from Hindu were edited for clarity and addition of emphasis on text put in parenthesis, such as {{...}} (1), followed by a commentary which is clearly separated from the article by a line of stars:

ARTICLEs

Why the Lord takes incarnations

The Lord wants the Divine Laws, which He Himself has preached during various manifestations, to be scrupulously followed and upheld. Though He is compassionate and impartial, He would not like these laws to be transgressed. Such violations would call for severe punishment but the Lord would not be so unkind and would give a just warning to those who indulged in it. When even this was not noticed and the transgressions continued without any let or hindrance, He would, after giving them a long rope, descend on the earth to punish the evil-doers. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord firmly declares that He has come to restore righteousness as it has been trampled under foot by human selfishness and perversity. The Lord felt sorry when human beings, without knowing His exalted status, considered Him as one among them or equal to them. His condition was similar to that of gold which did not grieve when it was put into fire and melted or beaten with hammer by goldsmith and then cut into pieces. Its sorrow knew no bounds when it was weighed against some grain or other inferior metal. Similarly the Lord did not object to when He was asked to go as an ambassador to the Kaurava court or given the job of a charioteer, but He did not like His being equated with human beings, because He has indicated through scriptures and other works that all of us are His property and He wants to bring us into His fold. Like the king who wages a war when a chieftain under him does not pay the money due to him, the Lord manifests with His Divine Weapons and other paraphernalia to correct individual souls who deviate from the path laid by Him and also forget Him. The Lord is equipped with an army of esoteric terms which themselves constitute His body and they are auspicious and pure natured. This army is used for winning back the true devotees so that they can join Him in mutual enjoyment of Bliss. The Lord grants salvation to all who unconditionally surrender at His feet. He holds the hand of these persons and takes them to {{heaven}} (1), say religious teachers. The Lord has declared that He remembers His devotees and will not forsake them. The Lord's feet not only protect His devotees but also Him as the Sakatasura episode testifies. (Wed. Mar. 24, 99)

COMMENTS:

(1) Heaven -Is there a heaven? Usually people point towards the sky by raising their one or both hands when they want to address God or heaven. In reality, the omnipresent God is every where, but the personified God can only be right here on earth where we are. As we know that our earth is one of the planet of our solar system with sun as the closest star to us, similarly our solar system is one of the many solar systems of our Milky Way Galaxy, just like there are many such galaxies in our Universe and many such universes. In Ramayan, it is written, (1) "Udar Maaza Sunu Andaj Raayaa, Dekheon BAHU BRHAMAAND Nikaayaa;" (2) "KOTINH (Karodo means millions) CHATURAANAN (Chatur means four and Aanan means face, i.e. Brahma -one with four faces) Gauresaa, Aganit Udagan Rabi Rajaneeshaa; Aganit Lokpaal Jam Kaalaa, Aganit Bhoodhar Bhoomi Bisaalaa." (3) EK EK BRAHMAAND Mahun, Rahao Barash Sat Ek;" (4) Bhramat Mohi BRHAMAAND ANEKAA, Beeten Manahu Kalpa Sat Ekaa;". All this indicates that

there are more than one universe. Scientists neither confirm the existence of many universes nor they deny it because they are only able to see a fraction of our universe from earth and nearby. So the sky or heaven, as is called sometimes, is virtually infinite, there is no end to it. The omnipresent, omnipotent, formless God is also infinite. So they point out to sky when addressing God. Since the company of God and saints is so blissful, it is also known and called as heaven. In reality both the heaven and hell, or God and devil are right here on this earth and not up there in the sky. Even if there are other places in the sky neither we can go there nor they (inhabitants) can come here. Hence for us the heavens and God both are right here. If we are aware of this we'll Love God and get heavenly bliss.

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Significance of Haj pilgrimage

Bakrid, a great Muslim festival of sacrifice, embraces the performance of Haj, a great event of annual concourse, taking place in Zil-Hajja - the last lunar month in Islamic Calendar, when Muslims from the farflung world of Islam, converge at the age-old place of Divine worship, namely Mecca, that houses the first sanctuary appointed for mankind, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples casting aside all tags of identity of race, color, rank and inherited nobility - indeed a wholesome demonstration of Oneness of God and brotherhood of man. Prophet Mohammed (Sal) says: "The reward for an untainted Haj is paradise itself." Haj is made incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, upon everyone who is able to undertake the journey. The Holy Quran enjoins upon the pilgrims that there should be ``no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Haj. And take a provision with you for the journey. But the best provision is right conduct. So fear me, O! Ye that are wise." Haj, literally means ``The repairing to Baitulla (House of Allah) to observe a course of devotion, as practised by Prophet Abram, who aided by his son, rebuilt Kaba (the House of God) and restored its sanctity, by purifying it of all traces of idolatry and thus prayed: ``Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty), thou art the Hearer and Knower". The basic requirements of Islamic faith are the Namaz, Zakar and/or Khon, Roza and Haj. During the farewell pilgrimage of Prophet Mohammed (Sal) God revealed in the Holy Quran: ``This day have I perfected My Favour upon you and have chosen for you Al-Islam, as your religion", making thereby, the approaching end of Al-Mustafa's ministry. Al-Islam means ``the surrender to Allah", a supreme manifestation of surrender that we find in that great historic episode, when Prophet Abraham prepared himself to sacrifice his only son, Ismail, begot in his old age which finds narration in the Holy Quran. The Haji, before returning home, visits the sacred city of Medina, the resting place of Prophet Mohammed, deeply conscious of his universal mission to mankind, a deeply moving experience like the pilgrimage itself to offer his salutation to the Holy Prophet sent ``as a Mercy to all the words" To establish faith in Allah and true worship and in the Holy Quran. Allah mentions, ``We have sent down to you a Messenger" who rehearses to you the signs of Allah containing clear explanations that {{he may lead forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the depth of darkness into light}}(1).

COMMENTS:

(1) God always sends His messengers on this earth. Started with He Himself, who imparted spiritual knowledge to His devotee who later became a saint. Thus when a saint departs from this earth for heavenly abode he imparts the spiritual power (Ruhaani inheritance) to one of his devotee or any body deserving at his will. In the former case the other devotees knows the

spiritual master but in the later case the search begins a fresh from both (disciple and master) sides until they find each other. Saints lead those, who believe in God and do righteous deeds, from darkness (GU) in to the light (RU). That is why they are known as Gurus. However during the tenure of any spiritual master their physical assets (body, "maths", ashrams, land, other belongings, etc.) remain, so a successor takes over these "Jismaani" things and starts a "panth", a "maarg", or a way, sect, denomination such as Buddhism, Christianity, Kabir panth, Vaishnav panth, Sikhism, etc. The spirituality turns in to rituals, customs, dogmas, rules and regulations of any religion. The God shifts in to lower forms such as holy books, idols, temples, etc. instead of in to man and people. This very ignorance makes people to fight wars, dislike other rituals, etc. On the other hand knowledge and wisdom of Truth leads them in to light or God.

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Desire increases with every gain

“Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straightforwardness and greed by contentment.” These golden words were revealed by the great exponent of Jainism, Mahavira, nearly 25 centuries ago. His sayings and other aphorisms of Jain spiritual leaders have been collected as “Pearls of Jaina wisdom”. One among them says “Victory over one's Self is greater than conquering thousands of foes on the battlefield.” Another prescription of his is “At the end of a day, an awakened person should contemplate as follows - what noble deeds have I done and what have I failed to do? What good acts remain to be carried out, which I ought to have but not accomplished?” According to the teachings of Bhagawan Mahavira, knowledge is that which helps to understand the Truth, controls the mind and purifies the soul. The soul, says Jainism, is the begetter of both happiness and sorrow. It is its own friend when it treads the path of Righteousness and its enemy when it travels on the forbidden road. By acquiring knowledge, one can understand the nature of substances, by faith one comes to believe in them, by conduct he puts an end to the flow of the consequences of past deeds and by austerity, he attains purity. Bhagawan Mahavira (whose Jayanthi was celebrated on Monday) has said that deception, fraud, uttering falsehood and adopting malpractices in trade are the four animal instincts which drag the soul to sub-human existence. Anger, pride, deceit and greed are the powerful enemies which encourage a person in the performance of sinful deeds. One who is interested in the welfare of his Self should get rid of these four flaws. Desire increases with every gain, because the more a person gets, the greater will be his needs. What starts as a gram of gold, will end in the tendency and eagerness to end in millions of grams. Reference is made to the brilliant morals which Mahavira and other Jain canonical texts preached. He who gets rid of his delusion, will have his misery destroyed. If his desires are checked, his delusion will be wiped out; if his greed is rooted out, his desire will be destroyed and {{he who owns nothing, has his greed removed}} (1). Mahavira's clarion call was as follows: “I forgive all living beings and may all humans forgive me in turn. I cherish friendliness towards all and do not harbour enmity towards anyone.” All scriptures, more particularly the Jain works, say that {{a human being has no right to take the life of an animal or other small helpless creatures}} (2). Mahavira showed to the people the paths of ecstasy and prosperity. One can develop dispassion by seeing the defects of sensual life. His advice was that the tendency to resort to {{materialism should give room to spiritualism}} (3). (Tuesday March 30, '99)

COMMENTS:

Dear Friend:

(1) If we consider ourselves as custodian or servant/manager of things/people around us instead of thinking that we own these things, we'll never develop attachment with these things and our most problems of desires, greed, anger, etc. should vanish.

(2) True, if we can't create a life we have no right to take the life. Some people thinks that parents create life, if it was so how come they not retain it when it leaves or ends. Parents create the body for housing the life, that-is-why we remain ever grateful to them. Even that body can not created until there is life in them. Once the body is created the (omnipotent) God infuse the spirit in it. Science knows every detail about a living cell but can not produce a single living cell because of not knowing and/or believing in spirit. Whereas, rishis, sages and seers of truth did blew life in matter, as the legend and history goes, for example: Kush (Brother of Lav) was made by Valmiki in to a living boy by blowing life in to straw (Kush); Ratnagiri's body was turned from white ants & dirt in to a living Valmiki by Narad; Ganesh's severed head was replaced by an elephant head, etc.

(3) There is no existence of matter without spirit. The cause and the reason, the matter exists is the spirit. As we make the house first before we start living in it, the matter is created first before life started. This is evident from the life of the earth as 4.5 billion years and the life of the living organism or tissue as 1.8 billion years. The spirit existed before all this matter billions and billions and billions (infinite) years ago and the spirit will exist after all this matter ceases to exist. Therefore, why not the materialism should give room to spiritualism? Specially when it has so far given, is giving now and will keep giving. It is just that we don't realise it. Unless we have God realisation we'll keep dwelling in materialism.

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Fri, 19 Mar 1999 12:36:57 -0500

Unique incarnation of the Almighty

One of the name of God is "Aja", which is generally interpreted to mean that the Supreme Being is birthless. This is a fact scriptures reiterate as the essential nature of the Almighty. But they also state that He assumes different forms and takes births according to His will. Lord Krishna Himself has clarified this in the Bhagavad Gita, "Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest through My own divine potency....."
Even if His incarnations like Rama and Krishna in which He assumed the human form are treated as birth as He was born to parents, it is important to remember that He chose to be born out of His will unlike human beings whose

births are determined by their Karma. Man does not have a choice about his

birth or death. Moreover the forms that the Lord assumes in His incarnations

are only for the sake of His devotees.

It is said that the Divine name Aja has been interpreted by Paraasar Bhattar as referring to His Narasimha form as this incarnation of the Lord

was unique in many aspects. Compared to His other incarnations, in this the

Almighty was not born in the conventional sense as it was an instant appearance.

While the Lord could determine the time and manner of His appearance in all

His other incarnations, in His {{incarnation as Narasimha}} (1) He had deferred that choice to Hiranyakasipu, to redeem the words of His devotee

Prahlada, who had with total faith declared that the Supreme Being was omnipresent. Saints have waxed eloquent on the manner in which the Lord waited to appear the instant Hiranyakasipu pointed to a particular spot.

The manner of His incarnation, the peculiar man-lion form and the time of

appearance all had to fulfil the conditions of the boon the demon king had

obtained with the intention of becoming invincible. (Wed. Mar. 17, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Narsinha incarnation was for a short duration of time, just to save His

devotee (Prahlad) by killing Harinyakashyap. Such incarnation or "Avatar",

including those of Rama, Krishna, etc. are known as "Nimit Avatar" or incarnation for limited purposes. Most people know only these Avatars because they did and can do miraculous things such as killing Ravan, and

Taraka, salvation of Ahilya, breaking Shiv Dhanush, etc. by Rama; lifting of

Goverdhan mountain, killing Putna, killing Kaliya cobra, killing Kansa, etc.

by Krishna; killing of Harinyakashyap, killing of Holika, etc. by Narsinha.

These incarnations are special incarnations, unusual, and unique incarnations. These incarnations only happen when the righteousness is

at

the verge of extinction and Lord's devotees are suffering beyond bearable. However, there is another incarnation, known as "Nitya Avatar". Very few people knew them -these were like Vashishtha, Durvaasa, Vishwamitra, Christ, Buddha etc. and many other saints. These incarnations are there to maintain and keep a balance of righteousness. There has never been any time when the earth was without at least one of the saints. Thus there is no time when there is no God. With best wishes Sincerely

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God pardons the faults of His devotees

The scriptures enumerate the countless auspicious qualities of the Supreme Being. Among them, some are very important from the standpoint of humanity. The relationship between the Almighty and human beings brings into focus especially His qualities of compassion and graciousness. These make Him ignore the faults of His devotees and play an important role in man's redemption from bondage. Even little acts of devotion or service to Him never go unheeded. The Ramayana while depicting Rama's sterling qualities highlights these in many instances. Rama felt grateful towards those who were kindly disposed to Him and would never forget even a small help rendered to Him. But He would forget and forgive those who were ill-disposed to Him. Rama had asked Sugriva to commission his Vanara army after the monsoon to locate Sita after getting back the kingdom for him but in his new-found luxurious life he had forgotten his promise to Him. Rama was naturally upset that he had not discharged his obligation towards Him as He was anxious about Sita's safety. When He expressed His reservations about Sugriva's silence to Lakshmana, he started in haste with bow in hand greatly angered about Sugriva's ingratitude. Rama's forgiving nature comes to the fore in the manner in which He pacified

Lakshmana, ``Surely no one like you, who knows what is right, will ever knowingly perpetrate such a sin as indulging in the very thought of killing a friend... Avoiding harsh words, you ought to speak to Sugriva, who stands guilty of delay, in a conciliatory language, reminding him of the time that has already elapsed." It is said that the Divine names were a pointer to the infinite auspicious qualities of the Almighty. The name "Sthiraha" occurring in the Vishnu Sahasranama is interpreted to mean His nature of ignoring the faults of His devotees. The name "Tat" in the hymn according to the commentary of Parasara Bhattar refers to His quality of being grateful for even a small service rendered to Him. The concept of surrender underscores the Almighty's Lordship of the entire creation and hence when a devotee seeks refuge in Him, the onus of granting succour to him rests upon the Lord. This was put to test in three instances of surrender - Prahlada, Gajendra and Draupadi, when He had to act instantaneously to save them from grave situations. In the first case He had to incarnate as Narasimha and in the case of the elephant He had to rush in person and the potency of His name saved the modesty of the woman who surrendered to Him. (Thurs., Mar. 18, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) Krishna said to Arjuna in Gita, "I love those Yogis most who love me most." In love we do not see people's faults and forgiveness ensues automatically. We have seen this in our daily life also that we tend to blow minor faults of people who do not love us quite out of proportion and consider these as very big faults, but we ignore and forgive even the biggest loss caused to us by those people who love us. God pardons His devotees because they immensely love God.

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The Self, source of eternal bliss

Man searches for eternal happiness in worldly attainments little realising that it is not possible to find it in them. The fulfilment one derives from material successes lasts only for a while. The scriptures point out the ephemeral nature of worldly life and reiterate that the goal of human life is to put an end to bondage by realising the nature of the Self (Atman) which is the source of lasting bliss. Until a person understands the transient nature of worldly joys he seeks fulfilment from sensory pleasures and it is through scriptural study and association with the saintly and the devout that he develops a spiritual outlook in life. Then he learns to strike the right balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life. The Vedas have devised a four-fold scheme for leading a fulfilled life in the world. They postulate four objectives -Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, which when pursued according to the prescribed method will enable a person to realise both material ends and the spiritual goal ultimately. It is thus clear that {{the Vedas do not prohibit man from seeking material pleasures}} (1) but they only caution that they should be legitimate and not transgress Dharma. It is said that a spiritual aspirant must learn to distinguish between his basic needs of life and indulgences as the demarcation between them was very hazy. {{The pursuit of the basic needs}} (2) like food, clothing and shelter, in most cases, becomes the sole preoccupation in life, if one does not know when and where to stop. There is no end to material pursuits and hence one must be wary of becoming a slave to them. Those who are convinced about the transitory nature of worldly life and want to pursue the spiritual path must first shift their dependence from worldly bondages to God so that their faith in the spiritual goal gets

strengthened.

As this conviction takes root they will be able to lead a worldly life without letting it affect them.

The analogy of a boat floating in water is apt to describe this attitude.

The boat has to remain in the water to be of use but it must never allow

water to enter into it. So also, man has to live in this world and seek his

salvation without running away from it. What is required is a change of perspective.

For one who embarks on the spiritual path the scriptures have prescribed two

methods to realise the goal of liberation. The first is {{the path of devotion about which abundant literature is available for guidance. The

second is the path of meditation (Dhyana)}} (3). (Fri. Mar. 19, '99)

Commentary

Dear friend:

(1) The man (soul) has to live in this material world (the body) until He

realises His true nature -that is Atma or self or spirit or Truth.

Thereafter, he lives just like the tongue lives in the mouth. We eat all

kinds of fat, sweets, and luscious foods through our mouth and our tongue

tastes every bit of it yet it does not attach itself to these tastes.

Neither it can keep it there for ever, nor is the fat accumulates on it.

Another example is of Lotus, which though remains in the mud but still above

the mud. Hence, the Vedas do not, rather can not, prohibit man from using

material things, however, one should never derive any pleasures from seeking

material things, as these very pleasures becomes causes for our bondage and

attachment with this material world and prevent God realisation.

(2) Basic needs of human being is very very limited. In reality, the spirit

or Atma needs nothing. The life does need just enough to sustain its living

only for one purpose -to know the spirit (the source of life). The good

gracious Lord has already provided that need for sustaining any life up

to
its full life span whether that may be 100 years or any amount of time.
In
fact the food "Anna" for sustenance of life is already provided by the
Lord
God just before or right when He gave the life. Otherwise, He would
not
conceive a life in an already existing life fit for conception. It is
the
greed and lust which are prime causes of our suffering, not the
fulfilment
of our needs. An economist said, "Needs can be satisfied but the wants
can
never be satisfied." As the story goes, "A dying king called his
treasurer
and asked him, how much wealth he has in the treasury. The treasure
replied, "Enough for your next 72 generations. The king enquired, What
will
happen to my 73 rd generation?" As if all the next 73 generations be
born
lame and they would not do any contribution." The wealthy king never
used
his present to know the Truth and remained lost in worries of the past
and
future. Some one said, "Past is a history, future is a mystery;
present is
a gift, that is why they call it present." This is the moment one can
use
it or he'll lose it from the forthcoming moment and a moment will
surely
come when it is too late to wake up as that will be a very very deep
sleep.
(3) Devotion is a very intimate, personal relation of an individual
with
God. It can not be obtained from abundant literature; how can they
guide us
if we do not want it from our heart. They will activate our minds, and
may
even influence our intellect, but that will simply increase our ego
which
will never let us reach in the vicinity of the spirit or God. Meera,
Shabari, Gargi, Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Kabira, Nanak, Rama, Krishna,
Bahaulaha, Ramakrishana, or any other who has realised God has done so
due
to their guileless heart, sheer ceaseless devotion and intense love,
not by

the abundant literature and scriptures. What would have happened when there were no scriptures and literature. Many of these saints did not even know how to read or write. The other path is perhaps meant as the path of knowledge (Jnana or Gyan), because meditation is one of the means of devotion. It is said in Ramayan, "Gyaan Panth Krappaan Ke Dhaaraa, Parat Khagesh Hoi Nahin Baaraa; Jo Nirbighna Panth Nirbahaee, So Kevalya Para Pad Lahaee." Means, "The path of knowledge is (very difficult) like walking on the edge of the sword, it does not take long in falling from this path; If one got through it without any hurdle he only got the "Mukti" or liberation." This shows that there is something beyond Mukti, as said in Ramayan, "As Bichaari Hari Bhagat Sayaane, Mukti Niraadar Bhagati Lubhaane;" means, "Therefore, thinking so the wise devotee always is attracted to devotion and does not care for liberation." Actually, a devotee is deputed by Lord in this world to help people know the God, a true devotee does not want to be away from his God and want to take birth again and again and love Him. Hence, the earlier path of love and devotion "Bhakti Marg" is the choice of wise. O learned man, inculcate the feeling of love, devotion and service in your heart and make this human life worth while by seeking God.

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PS: Some of us might notice that over the past over one year that we have been having these articles and they are making repetition now more frequently than before. I can only say that if these are good and beneficial to us let there be so. We are not fed up of breathing repeatedly, or eating every day after day, or wearing clothes, or having day and night every day after day repetitiously, why should we fed up with this,

if it helps us? It's beautifully said in Ramayan, "BHOJAN KARIA TRAPITI HITA LAAGI, JIMI SO ASAN PACHAVE JATHARAAGEE; ASI HARI BHAGATI SUGAM SUKHDAAEE, KO ASA MOODHA NA JAAHI SOHAAEE." Just like we get satisfaction

of hunger by eating food, the "jeev" or life does not get satisfaction until it is united with God -its infinite source, the Atma

=====.

Tue, 16 Mar 1999 12:35:13 -0500

The three 'Ds' one should observe

Whether a person is well versed in sacred works, or a hero who has many victories to his credit or a destitute grueling in penury, without devotion he can be considered worthless. A servant with extreme and deep devotion in his heart is worthier of veneration than a king bereft of it, says a poem.

Having taken birth as a human being, if he fails to know his innate divinity, life will become meaningless. Devotees may face all types of trials but their attachment to God should never diminish.

Forgetting the task of purchasing horses assigned to him by a king, his minister immersed in spiritual exercises and used the money in renovating a

Shiva temple. Even when imprisoned for this "audacious" act, he continued

his service to God and wrote a brilliant work. Later he became a saint. Many such saints were born in India. Divinity, which blossomed in this country, is not noticed elsewhere. Another saint, a weaver by profession,

was once accosted by the arrogant son of a rich man and asked for the price

of a sari. When this was quoted, he tore the cloth into two pieces and sought to know their cost. The saint quoted half the price for each.

The boy tore the cloth into two once again and wanted how much the piece would now

cost and the saint replied that it would be one-fourth of the original price. The boy realized his mistake, wondered at {{the honesty of the "seller" and sought his pardon and got totally transformed}} (1).

Life in the world is impermanent; so are youth, wealth, wife and children.

Only Truth and good will remain for ever, says Adi Sankara in a hymn.

The entire creation of God has emerged from Truth and merges in it. The Bhagavad Gita adds that having taken birth in this sorrow-filled world, man

has only to worship God for His grace. All possessions which a person has acquired and cherished may be taken away in a moment by the tide of time.

In a lecture, Sri Sathya Sai Baba said that people should cultivate steadiness of mind. Man has all comforts and intellect. Yet he is not able to reach his destination. He should have a strong will. A small ant can travel long if it has {{the will}} (2) whereas an eagle cannot move an inch if it is not determined to fly further. God's only thought is about His devotees. Though there are numerous devotees, yet they are seen experiencing difficulties. They are no doubt immersed in worship, but what is required is a total surrender. "Do your duty; devotion should be steady; observe discipline", are the three "Ds" one should strictly observe. (Sat. Mar 13, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) Honesty is the best policy. Saints by nature are honest, we can say dead honest. When the boy -the son of a rich man, tore the sari to a point that it can hardly be used in half, let alone quarter pieces, it was rendered useless yet the saint asked half the price or quarter the price. This is how we define a saint. They turn the second cheek when slapped on the first, as said by Mahatma Gandhi. They bless their adversaries and enemies, actually they have no enemies. Ramayan says about the character of a saint, "Saadhu Charit Subh Charit Kapaasoo, Niras Bisad Gunmaya Phal Jaasoo; Jo Sahi Dukh Parchidra Duraavaa, Bandaneeya Jehin Jag Jas Paavaa." Means, "Saints character is an auspicious character (like) cotton, whose result is very fruitful (Gunmaya) without any of his (saint's) interest; (they suffer pain for others gain) cotton suffers the pain to loose itself in mending a hole in others (clothes), the world (therefore) revere them and their glory and fame is eternal."

(2) Will is everything. It is said, "where there is will there is a way."
If the will to serve people is there, we find time in lunch time, break-time, early morning or late night. It is said, "A busy man always finds time." Lazy don't. Will is everything. The whole creation came out of the will of God. We are born due to the will of God who initiated a thought in our parent's mind to have a child. Without will we can not walk, talk, write, or do any thing. The will triggers the mechanism to initiate thoughts of hunger, thirst, etc. Why not have will to know our own selves. It would be pathetic and pity to know that we know many other things but not our own self -"Atma", spirit, or God.

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Man's action should be in pursuit of God

In the present age people think erroneously that they can be happy by enjoying material comforts. They do not know that there is an energy which is very strong and that they are activated by its force. This energy is "the Lord" and every animate and inanimate things form part and parcel of it. The natural function of every human being is to render unstinted devotion to the Lord. Every one of man's action should be in pursuit of God and for this, the foundation is effort. The Lord has said that if one cannot fix one's mind upon Him without deviation, then he will have to follow the regulated principles of "Bhakti Yoga" which will make him develop a desire to attain Him. {{This will help one to purify his senses which are always immersed in worldly pursuits}} (1).
In this material world, men are engaged in some employment but serve the master, not out of love. They simply do their job to get that pay check for material comforts. The master also is not in love with his employees and

takes service from them only after paying for it. {{But when one wants to do spiritual service, pure love is needed and this can be got only through devotion to the Lord}} (2).
How many people are aware that they have to do good things to gain salvation and not fall into the cycle of rebirths? An individual must also learn that with the passing of every day he is not growing younger and instead he is slowly dying. If he goes to seashore he can see millions of footprints including his own and should know that they all have passed into oblivion.
His being in the world is to only redeem himself, said Swami Suddhananda in his discourse.
If a man wants money, food, power and position, he will have to seek it from different places. But to be happy, he will have to find it through meditation. Every one is looking for himself alone in the name of religion and philosophy. {{Happiness is not so easy to experience}} (3) and he will have to discover it. Unfortunately due to ignorance, many people are not doing it. They needed to do self-introspection and understand God by worship and true devotion.
{{The Lord has also explained the difference between the worship of the undefinable, impersonal God and that of Absolute Reality}} (4). "Those who concentrate all their actions to the Manifest Absolute i.e., to Me and worship Me with intent mind, will be rescued by Me from the ocean of ceaseless rounds of re-birth. Rely on Me and you will attain pure love. Even if you are not able to concentrate, you can try and try again by constant intense practice. Then you can achieve your goal", Krishna said in Gita.

(Mon. Mar 15, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) Because that's what these senses are. The physical, material things.

Even these physical senses also sense this physical material world due to

the presence of the spirit; without spirit these senses, including the whole body, are useless, just like dirt -rather worse than the dirt.

(2) That is true; that is the service with smile, service before self, with no strings attached. If there is a condition of service it is a business -something in exchange of some thing. But, that is the service out of love, pure love -not the one like you scratch my back and I scratch yours, not the one like I raised my children so that they can take care of me when I get old. God is known only by pure love, unconditional surrender due to total love and devotion; as Meera said, "Ye To Aavat Prem Ke Mol." She further said, "Paayo Jee Me To Raam Ratan Dhan Paayo; Vastu Amolak Deeni Mere Satguru, Kirpaa Kar Apanaayo." Means, "I got the most valuable wealth -God, my spiritual master has given me the priceless thing that he accepted me and gave his grace." What are we waiting for, then?

(3) Happiness is not so easy to experience because we try to get that happiness from the dead objects. We are alive and how can a living being be happy from millions of dead things. Do we ever smile to walls and stones? But we invariably do that to people, humans, beautiful creation of the Lord. The beauty is then only in the spirit, otherwise don't we discard that matter when it is devoid of the spirit? Just like only a live person can converse with another live person, the happiness of a living being can only come from the eternal living being. That will be the infinite happiness -the bliss from God.

(4) The undefinable, impersonal God is not of much use. It is like the water in fog, mist, or dew. It can not satiate our thirst. Until we get pure drinking water -the God, we shall remain thirsty. That God is the personal God which is Absolute Reality. We can touch, see, hear, talk, learn, and converse with him. He is the ONE who motivates and inspires us to see the Lord we have in ourselves -the Atma, the spirit, the Brahma.

That is why Tulsi said in Ramayan, "More Man Prabhu As Bisbaasaa, Raam Se Adhik Raam Kar Daasaa." Means, "More than God is the servant of God, thus believe I." Other wise it is very easy to worship the undefinable, impersonal God "Nirgun Brahma". It won't say a word if you pour cold water or milk, yogurt, etc. in a wintry morning at 4:00 a.m. on a "Shiva-Ling" -an impersonal God, to worship that God; however, you will need nerves to do that to your father, or spiritual master, or anybody else you love so much to worship him or her -your son, mother, spouse, friend, etc. Why can't we do that when we can take any stone, any glittering paper for a symbol of "Om" or "Swastika" or "Trishul", any idol of silver, gold, brass etc. or any photo and start worshiping it as a God. Just because we do have a part of God in us. Actually the God is there in that paper or idol, etc. also but it is not manifested to the same degree as in humans. Ramayan says, "Nirgun Brahma Sulabh Ati, Sagun Jaan Na Koe; Sugam Agam Naanaa Charit, Suni Muni Bharmas Hoe." Means, "It is easy to worship the formless, undefinable God, (and) no body (a few) knows the live God; as the live God does such actions which are doubtful to even sages." Only a live Krishna can tell to a live Arjuna, "Worship Me, I shall rescue you, help you obtain salvation, pure love."

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Nature of the Lord's incarnations

The knowledge of the Self (Atman) which is elaborated in the scriptures has been revealed time and again for the benefit of humanity. At the time of creation this supreme Yoga was revealed in the form of the Vedas to {{Sun-god}} (1) which was transmitted in the traditional method of instruction from teacher to disciple (Guru- shishya). The same wisdom was

imparted by the Lord when He incarnated as Krishna to Arjuna in the battlefield, in the form of the Gita. This reference is made by the Lord Himself in the Gita which provoked Arjuna to ask Him how He could have taught someone belonging to a different age altogether. By way of clarifying his doubt, Lord Krishna touched upon the distinction between His manifestations and human births by introducing the unique concept of Divine incarnation. While the rebirth of a bonded soul is referred to as "Janma" the Almighty's manifestation in the world is called as "Avatara".

In his lecture on the Bhagavad Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said that there were three basic differences between human births and the Lord's incarnations. The birth of a bonded soul is caused by ignorance which is due to ego. The ego in turn is due to Karma, the result of deeds (good and bad) performed in previous lives. The fructification of Karma results in Janma and this process goes on and on till the knowledge of the Self dawns when the bonded soul is liberated. So human birth is a downfall from the original state of the Self. In the case of Iswara who is omniscient He chooses to manifest whenever He feels it is necessary out of His will. So His incarnations are out of compassion for mankind.

As human birth is the result of ignorance worldly life continues to be sorrowful, whereas, in the case of the Lord's incarnations His omniscient nature is not in anyway limited by a form. So there is no question of bondage. The scriptures state that the bodies of all created beings are made up of matter but there is a difference between that of other beings and the one that the Lord assumes during His incarnations which is not made of the five elements.

The purpose of human birth is to work out the accumulated Karma of the

previous lives. The scriptures state that Karma can be exhausted only by assuming a body; Punya (good deeds) is enjoyed as joys and Papa (bad deeds) as sorrows. The Lord's incarnations are with the purpose of protecting the virtuous, establishing righteousness whenever there is decadence and to achieve these two He destroys the wicked who cause obstruction to Dharma in the world. (Tues. Mar. 16,

'99)*****

COMMENTARY

(1) The Sun-god! Is there a God in the Sun? Yes, if the God is omnipresent, God is present every where -in the Sun, the Moon, the stars, or the grain of sand on the Earth, etc. But, could the supreme Yoga -Bhakti Yoga, be possibly revealed to the Sun or the grain of sand ? Doubtful, rather impossible. In the beginning, the God Himself was, as is even now, the supreme knower of the all knowledge. When he gave it to Sungod, it must not be the same Sun as we see it today. This appears to be an adjective. A disciple who obtains the spiritual knowledge from his master, when the later gives him, becomes the master of that knowledge, just like a child becomes the father of a man. He is self enlightened. The light of spiritual knowledge is different than the light acquired through knowledge via senses. The later is synonymous to the light emitted by a lamp -which is dependent on oil, cotton wick, pot, and a source for its light. Unlike the lamp, the spiritual light is not depended on any thing for emitting light. A spiritual master has his own self contained light like that of the Sun. Hence, said Sungod. It is just like we admire somebody by saying, "You are a gem, or you are a diamond." Does not really mean the person is a diamond or a gem. It simply means that the person is precious, highly valuable. Thus Sungod should mean any person having self realization having his own independent light -like that of a Sun or star. Then, "Veda" ,means "to

know". When a person has that spiritual knowledge he can write it in the form of a scripture. Thus it has been said , "Vedas came from God" or "God has written the Vedas." Of course, the inspiration always comes from God, but the self realized person speaks or writes it. There were many such saints in the past who are still addresses as God. These are Bhagwan Mahaaveer, Buddha Bhagwan, etc. Even today many people call some saints like Santh Saain Baba, etc. as Bhagwan or God.

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Fri, 12 Mar 1999 12:23:36 -0500

Desire, cause of all human problems

{{Modern man has been "exploring" the entire universe and cosmos and has made several wonderful discoveries about flora and fauna. But what he needs to know is about "his own self" as to "who am I?"}} (1) He has not "explored" his own mind and that is the reason why he is feeling unhappy and faces many difficulties. His mind is static and needs to "digest" all the problems confronting him. If a man takes unsavory type of food, it will lead to stomach upset. If on the other hand he resorts to the right varieties he will have no difficulty and in the same manner he has to assimilate the idea about God, himself, world, morality and ethics. Everyone must know how to understand and appreciate the nature of the creations of God. This will lead to appreciation of human mind and body. Most of the problems faced by the world were due to {"closing" of mind}} (2). When two people fight with each other it is between two human minds or inter-personal fight. There is also another kind of battle known as {{intra-personal fight which is between different parts of a human mind}} (3) . A man may be a loving father for his son or daughter but as a husband he may not be considered

that good. He may be smiling outwardly but his mind may be burning.
This is because he has been overcome by desires. If people are asked about their wants each one will give a different reply. If one is questioned as to why he is keen to get educated, he will reply that he is doing so for securing a good job. Another will say that he desired to earn a lot of money and lead a comfortable life. So everyone wants to be happy; no one will say that he likes to remain unhappy. But how to get happiness which seems to be the destination of each and every human being? If man gives up all desires and becomes renounced he will get real happiness. That is beatitude. But if he indulges in worldly life and cultivates {{desires}} (4), he will not be happy. Only man becomes desirous of worldly objects which in turn leads to agitation of human mind. One must not allow any force to "manipulate" his mind and succumb to pressures for the possession of worldly things. For he will not be able to take anything with him at the end of his life. He must try to understand various problems and tackle them. He should not run away from them. How this can be done? He must try to understand the problems and train his thoughts on them and find a way out. The most vital problem is the thought of "I" and the feeling that "I am doing it." This feeling is a deadly virus. To avoid it one has to "explore" his mind and this will give him guidance and help.

(Wed. Mar. 10,99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Would this not be like a lamp providing light to everyone but is itself in darkness? That is why it is not an eternal light. Man must have light

both within and outside. A god realized soul is like the self illuminated and it only comes after we know the Name, or the Word of God. Tulsi said in Ramayan, "Raam Naam Kaa Deep Dharun, Je Dehri Dwaar; Tulsi Bheetar Baharun, Jo Chahansi Ujjaar." Means, "Put the lamp of God's Word at the door sill of your house; you will have the light outside the house or within it, as you wish."

(2) Some body said, "Minds are like parachutes, they only function when open." Close your mind and you know what happens to the person; just as what happens to a person when his parachute does not open.

(3) Is it not telling us that there is a God -the spirit, and a man -made of worldly things including mind, habits, desires, customs, rituals, preferences, etc. within us. There always is a constant fight between the God and the man (or devil) within us. If we are close to God we win over the devil else the devil wins over us and prevent us to know God. Every mind gets two thoughts -known as "Sankalpa" and "Vikalpa", or good thought and bad thought, as a result of feed back from it's any or all of ten senses or "Indriyaa". The mind can not make a decision so present the thought to the wisdom which selects one and return back to mind which then acts through the same indriyaas. When the "Buddhi" or wisdom gets pious due to its association with Godly people it makes the right selection else a wrong decision results.

(4) Desires are all generated by our mind who controls all ten senses. Desire to know God is very good, whereas, desire to possess worldly things is very bad. Our desires turn in to our liking, which turns in to our love for them. We say I love this poem, or that food, or this fellow. Someone has said, "There are three kinds of Love: First, love for material things.

This love eventually turns a person in to matter like. The person behaves

like a matter and eventually becomes the matter. This is the most inferior type of love. Second, love for people. This is better than the previous type, because love for humans has a probability to either drive one closer to matter (which humans are with their bodies, clothes, watches, eyeglasses, expensive autos, furniture, homes, etc.) or drive one closer to God (as every human has that live "Atma" is God or soul in them). The third type of love is love for God. this is the supreme type. In this people resist going back to humanly love and certainly not to love for material. People with this love love everybody because of their having God in them. They do not even see material possession of people. They do not even see the gross body (Sthul shareer) of people with their gender, age, etc., they see the subtle body (Suksham shareer) and at times they see causal body (Karan shareer) -why did IT became so? They are the saints who declare, "Prem Prem Sab Koe Kahe, Prem Na Jaane Koe; Jis Vidh Saain Milan Ho, Prem Kahaave Soe." Means, "Everybody says love but no body knows the Love, the way we can meet God is only known as (True) Love. They do not consider desire or longing for material things and human as love. Is it not true, as said in Upnishad, that "After obtaining an ocean of water, the interest a man has in a pond of water is the interest a person will have in worldly material things and humans after obtaining God?"

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Saint who sang the glory of Rama

The lives of spiritual leaders, who by virtue of their intense penance and severe austerities had secured powers to go near God and walk and talk with Him, kindle hope in many of us as to why we too should not try to adopt such

measures and witness the vision of God or experience His presence within us.

It is certainly possible to do so provided we too display similar unshakeable faith in the Divinity's supremacy and resort to steps like chanting and meditation. By constant utterance of a Mantra taught by a bonafide spiritual master or guide it will be easier to approach the Almighty as {{it (the mantra), possesses energy which will be released when it is repeated with full confidence in its efficacy}} (1).

Even two centuries ago, living amidst us, having meditated on Rama using a special mantra prescribed by a saint, a dignitary who had developed an aversion to worldly pleasures but was deeply attached to the Lord, saw Him in flesh and blood. He had chanted the name millions of times which equipped him with the strength to remain totally dedicated to Him even in the midst of adverse circumstances. The path he chose was to sing compositions on Rama, each one of which contained the qualities of mercy and compassion of Rama. Once as he was returning home after his bath, this saint was blinded by a flash of light (like a lightning) and there he saw Rama with His brother, young and dazzling, holding bow and arrow, to protect the special religious rite of a sage who had led them to a forest. {{This saint was none other than Thyagaraja who saw God through the path of adoring Him by the rendering of devotional songs. He is believed to be the manifestation of Valmiki, who had written the Ramayana}} (2).

Even as it is possible to dig out fresh gems of thoughts as one makes an in-depth study of the epic, every song of this saint is soaked in philosophic truths and ideas. For instance, he says in a composition that the number of devotees having drunk the elixir of the name of Rama, having increased and thereby becoming eligible to get liberation, the "Yamraj" (king of Death) was worried as there was decrease in people brought to his kingdom.

The reason for this composer-saint to choose Rama as his idol was because of

His adherence to virtue, His rare and admirable qualities and His zeal to remain steadfast to values. In another song he refers to the role of a guide as one who can clear the shrubs which have grown in the caves of the hearts of his disciples. By uttering the name of Rama the sins that have accrued will get flushed out and there will be no chance of any one again entering inside. (Thurs. Mar. 11,

'99)*****

Dear Friend:

(1) The Mantra does not possess any energy, but the spiritual power descends down in to the person who meditate on it. It is the person's energy due to his or her increased will power, concentration, and meditation, which surface up in to the visible energy. The fire is there in a piece of wood but of no use until it (the piece of wood) is broken in to two and rubbed against each other constantly that it will ignite the fire or it is lighted by another burning piece of wood. That fire is useful in cooking your meals, or burning your Karma -both good and bad. The fire each one of us has in ourselves is of no use and waste in worldly things, until we come across a burning fire and light up our stick with it, or until we go through the penance and austerities to ignite that fire in us. Mantra is an advice we get from consultation or "Mantranaa" with a spiritual master. It is also called "Updesh". Thus it is utterly important to have Updesh from a perfect spiritual master in order to have God realization. There is none who has realized God without a Guru and from the past history and experience it may be safely stated that perhaps none will realize God without a Guru.

(2) There were several saints who sang the glory of Rama. These are notably Tulsi, Valmiki, etc. However, the Rama whom they knew was certainly not that Rama -the son of Dasharath, or the king of Ayodhya. It was the omnipresent, omnipotent God -the Rama, which dwells everywhere, in every human, which manifested in a particular person through whom these saints got the God realization. Narhariji was the Rama for Tulsi; Narad was the Rama for Valmiki. Once you know the Truth, you can sing that Truth using any name -may it be Rama, or Krishna, or Christ, or Allah, etc. Time is an important factor. We can know Rama -the son of Dasharatha, who was born some hundreds of thousands of years ago. How can we like or love him? In Ramayan it is said, "Jaane Binu Na Hoi Parteetee, Binu Parteeti Hoi Nahin Preetee; Preeti Binaa Nahin Bhagati Didhaee, Jimi Khagpati Jal Ke Chiknaaee." Means, "Without knowing (someone) one can not recognize him, without recognition one cannot love him; without love the devotion can not get stronger, just like without water how can the grease go away." Thus, the fact is that without knowing Rama one cannot sing the glory of Rama. They (saints) knew it better that without Guru they could not have known God -the Rama, as said in Ramayan, "Binu Gur Hoi Ki Gyaan, Gyaan Ki Hoi Biraag Binu; Gaavahin Bed Puraan, Sukh Ki Lahia Hari Bhagati Binu." Means, "One can not have wisdom or self realization without a Guru, (and) without longing and intense love for him one can not have self realization; all Vedas and Puraans (a scripture) sing that glory, how can one be happy or "Sukhee" without (love and) devotion to God."

With best wishes
sincerely

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Three ways open for human beings

A human being is privileged to have been shown three pathways. {{If by his thoughts, words and deeds, he puts others into trouble, he will be destined to go to the place where he will receive due punishment. If he works for others' welfare and acts with his conscience, he will receive rewards but he will again be made to enter the cycle of re-birth}} (1). When he resorts to the path of devotion in a spirit of non-attachment and confines himself to the Law of the Divine, he will secure liberation. Hence saints in their teachings have laid enormous emphasis on cultivating devotion for which the easy step is to be intimately associated with such holy men who will prescribe a Divine name meditating on which he can retain the vision of God within and refrain from indulging in sinful acts. Saint Tulsidas has said that devotion, the source of all well-being and happiness, can be generated within, by associating with pious persons who will not do anything contrary to the Law of Righteousness. Gita says it is possible to realize God only through this stairway and by meditating on His Holy name. Without devotion, man's life is purposeless and can be compared to clouds which can bring no rain. Enlightened spiritual guides have left a rich treasure. By finding out how they had conducted themselves, we can derive knowledge about the ways to realize God. But to understand the mystical energy that is inside us and to adopt the spiritual exercises necessary for us, we have to approach a spiritual guide who can lead us on the suitable safe highway. Once Guru Nanak went to Mecca and slept with his feet in the direction of the "Qaba". An infuriated priest condemned the "atrocious" act but Nanak replied, "Please turn my feet in any direction where the Lord does not exist." Asked for an introduction about himself, the Sikh leader said, "If I say I am a Hindu, it will annoy Muslims. To say I am a Muslim will be a lie. My

body is made of five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). The ray of divine light exists inside this frame which has been given the name of Nanak". What is man's eternal {{religion}} (2)? Has the child inside the womb any caste or religion? What lies ahead after death and where does the soul transmigrate? The spiritual master can unveil the secrets of life and can help a sincere disciple to establish a bridge between himself and God. Hence, the stress is laid on "Sat Sang" or association with God's messengers, said Swami Musafir Anand in a lecture explaining what "Manav Dharma" (Man's charter of duties) signifies. Spiritual progress is the core of the message of all religions. (Fri. Mar. '12. '99)

Comment:

(1) We have a saying, "What goes around comes around." The Bible says, "Do unto others as you want to do unto you." All scriptures and the law of Karma "Actions and its effects" further substantiate it. If we serve our parents, we'll be served by our children. If we helped others, others will help us. Whatever a man does -good or bad, he gets its result -reward or punishment.

It has been like this ever since the creation, we just do not realize it.

(2) True religion of the man is to know God, to be united with God.

That is what re-legion means. All these so called religions -Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Sufism, etc. (any other "isms"),

are merely sects, cults, different beliefs and faiths. A person believes in always speaking truth, in being honest, and making a clean simple living, moves in to a society where the whole environment is of dishonesty, telling lies, and complex unchristian living, then there is all possibilities that this person may change his beliefs and start lying, or be dishonest, etc. to

mix with the society. thus his beliefs changes. Similarly these co
 called
 religions changes from place to place and time to time depending upon
 circumstances. Moreover, all these so called religions are for a
 living
 person. Dead people do not have these, similarly people before their
 birth
 do not have theses. Thus these are all not true religions because they
 do
 not fit our definition of truth, which is eternal, changeless, ever
 pervading. Therefore, the true religion is the religion of mankind.
 If we
 are not a good human, we can never be a good Moslem, or a Hindu, or
 Christian, etc.
 There is a vast difference between acquired knowledge and the inherent
 wisdom the soul has. A new born child does not know if he or she is
 Hindu
 or Christian, he or she acquires it from the environment he or she is
 in.
 They see their parents worship in a particular way -call it Hindu way,
 or
 Moslem way, etc. and they register that through their senses an starts
 grabbing that way, until after they get the wisdom to know the Truth.
 They
 then get glimpse of the Truth and realize IT. God realization is
 nothing
 but knowing our own selves, the spirit, soul. And the SPIRIT is no
 Hindu,
 Moslem, etc. IT has no gender, no age, no sects, no cults. IT is
 purely a
 small part of that infinite spirit or GOD.

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 Tue, 9 Mar 1999 12:47:45 -0500

ARTICLE

Concepts of joy and sorrow

Control of mind and the five Senses are the prerequisites for
 God-realization as they are considered to be the sources of all evils.
 Like
 a tortoise which draws all its limbs inside the shell when it is
 attacked by
 its enemies, one should keep under check the five foes within. This
 advice
 was tendered by none other than Kapila Muni, who is an incarnation of

the Supreme Being. Though not one of the main manifestations of the Lord, which are 10 in number, he is considered as the unique repository of all Vedas. The sage's mother, Devahuti, who spent all her early years in the vortex of family life, wanted to gain real knowledge and sought the same from her son (1). The conversation between the two centers round what is true happiness and sorrow. It also reveals the three principles - the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the real authority that allows enjoyment. But opinions may differ about the enjoyment - happiness and sorrow. What is joy for one may not be the same for another. Even Rama and Sita held different views about these concepts of pleasure and distress. When Rama was about to leave for the forest, Sita wanted to accompany Him, but the emperor's son, trying to persuade the Divine Mother to stay on in Ayodhya, told Her that She would not be able to withstand the hardships that would be encountered there. Then Sita queries the Lord as to what was meant by paradise and hell. The Lord replied that in the former place one could enjoy all comforts. The hell would be the place where sinners would be severely punished for their past misdeeds. Analogous to these (heaven and hell) was spending life in a palace and in the forest. But Sita differed from the Lord and told Him that even the palace, with all its comforts, would be like hell for Her if the Lord was not there. Forest, with all its discomforts like scorching heat, thorny bushes and dangerous animals would be like heaven for Her as She would have Her husband there to protect Her from all evil forces. Likewise Kapila told his mother that if an individual soul was in the company of the Supreme Soul, it would be all bliss for it and if it was separated from the Almighty its grief would be limitless. The concepts of joy and sorrow will not only vary from person to person but they will

also
change in respect of the same person during different times. What was
happiness in one's youth might turn into sorrow in his old age. {{So
what a
man desiring to obtain Bliss should do is to control the mind and the
Senses. Only when the mind becomes pure through self-control, good
deeds and
right action, man would be able to reach his destination - the Holy
Feet of
the Lord}} (2). (Sat., Mar. 06, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) It is said in Vedas, "Let knowledge flow to us from all corners."
Knowledge is not a copy right of any one person. It is irrespective of
some
one's age. One can learn it at any age and one can teach it (to
someone)
at any age. The only prerequisite is that the person must know it
before he
or she can impart it to some one.

(2) If we try to resist the temptation of the senses and mind, we will
always have their awareness and it will be very hard, if not
impossible, to
control these. But the easy way is that if we use these (senses and
mind)
in Love and service to God, we will not have any time left for these
senses
and mind to wander on millions of worldly things. Then once a sense
gratifying idea comes in mind, immediately we get the thoughts of the
God,
we remember God and the sense gratifying ideas instantly vanishes.
Such is
the power of Love, and devotion to God. Actually then the God steers
our
vehicle, our thoughts and ideas are all under His command and we (the
soul)
never go astray, but reach our destination -the Holy lotus feet of the
Lord.
The jeev says, "O'God, I have seen your face, let me see your feet."
Let me
be in Your service.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Article

Saint who preached spiritual humanism

Apart from spreading the message of God among people for their spiritual enlightenment, some of the saints in olden days used to tender genuine advice to kings and emperors about good governance as they themselves had gained knowledge about administration. The rulers, in their turn, never hesitated to accept such suggestions for winning the admiration of the people and also to know the tactics of the opponents and how to frustrate their moves. Among such luminaries who stood out with effulgent brilliance, with devastating phenomenal powers of argument was the patron-saint of four Vijayanagar kingdoms, particularly the one ruled by Krishnadevaraya, Vyasathirtha Swami, who saved him from the throes of death. A valiant defender of Sri Madhwacharya's philosophy, Vyasaraja used his logical acumen to preach the doctrine of spiritual humanism backed by "duty and discipline". He united the "Daasas" or those who adopted music as the medium to spread faith and also united Sanskrit scholars. Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa, the two illustrious bards who sang Divine glory were his disciples, Vyasaraja himself had left us an epitome of Bhagavad Gita. Vyasaraja loved the masses, had ample sympathy for the average minds and had proved that renunciation did not merely mean to retire to a secluded spot to attain spiritual enlightenment just for oneself but it means to remain in the society and do service to humanity without the desire for fruits. When a congregation of planets was found to affect the life of Krishnadevaraya, {{the saint himself volunteered and averted the danger by temporarily adorning the throne, and driving away "death" which came in the form of a snake. The moment the impending disaster was averted, Vyasaraja vacated the throne displaying his detachment}} (1). "Devotion is the sovereign remedy to reach the Lord. It means crucifixion of ego and absolute commitment of our life to God" was his simple message

for
humanity. (Mon. Mar. 08, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) That is one of the saintly qualities. They take the danger on themselves and save others, specially their devotees. They do not get attached to any thing but Truth. They are the Truth.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Rama never deviated from path of virtue

If a man performs his duties with utmost devotion and acts as per the dictates of his elders and on the path shown by them he wins beatitude.

This

will make him worship the Lord and dedicate all his actions to Him from whom

the world has issued and by whom all that we see is pervaded. {{The

Lord's

incarnation as Rama was not only to show to the world the path of

Righteousness but also to set an example for others to follow. Though

God

could have carried out His task in a trice with the help of His Divine

Weapons, He suffered like any other human being and never deviated from

the

path of virtue. There are numerous instances of the Lord acting

according to

the instructions of His father, His preceptors, Valmiki and

Viswamithra, and

other sages later. Though He could have done many things on His own, He

always waited for instruction from elders and thus wanted the posterity

to

tread the path laid by Him}} (1).

The Vaishnavite saints and Acharyas were so much influenced by the

incarnation of Rama that they have sung paeans about His great

qualities.

Sage Viswamithra who takes Rama and Lakshmana after arguing with

Dasaratha

and telling him that he knew who Rama was and the objective of His

coming

down to earth, enjoys each and every action of the Lord. When he comes

to

wake Him up in the morning, the beauty of the Lord lying on a stone

enchants

him so much that he forgets himself for a moment and then addresses the

famous verse of Suprabatha. Though knowing that He is the Divine Being,

the

sage wakes him to perform the morning ritual, which is very important for every individual. Ramanuja, even in his ripe old age when he was unable to get up from the bed, used to seek the help of his disciples to rise and perform the rituals standing all along.

After slaying Taraka with a single arrow, the brothers helped the sage perform the sacrifice by building an umbrella of arrows over the place where it was being performed and also slayed Subahu while driving away Maricha.

The sage who wanted to show to the world the greatness of the Lord's Holy Feet, took Him to sage Gautama's place of residence where his wife, Ahalya was lying as a stone due to a curse and she was redeemed. (Tues., Mar. 08. '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) All incarnations of God and saints are capable of doing anything they wish to do, but they always follow the laws of nature, worldly customs and sometimes rituals also. They never do miracles and destroy righteousness.

Their incarnation is solely to bless their devotees and restore righteousness. They set ideals and examples for others to follow. But we can follow it if we do not know it. And we can not know it unless we meet a saint. That is why we must meet a saint, lest the God, as the later is hard to recognize.

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Fri, 5 Mar 1999 12:17:41 -0500

ARTICLE

Selfless service helps one get God's grace

One of the methods prescribed in scriptures to enable an aspirant to visualize God within his {{heart}} (1) is to get "initiated" by a qualified

guide with a suitable incantation (Mantra) constantly meditating on which, with deep faith in its efficacy, he can obtain the fruits for his efforts. {{One should marvel at the varieties of such Mantras on different deities, which have been left behind by sages. Each Mantra, when repeated with absolute concentration, releases the mystical energy encased within it, generates creative force and awakens man's consciousness. The meaning, sometimes more than one of the Mantras, will have to be dug out by spiritual leaders. Each of them will be to invoke the grace of a particular deity.}}

(2)

Even in recent times, saints who have remained with us have composed hymns, hiding within them incantations {{on the deity whom they adored}} (3). If He is beautiful how is it of any use or relevance to a devotee? There should be a significance in the saint's words. Commentators have spelt out several meanings and how the worshippers can derive benefit. A poet says that this word in the Mantra refers to His abundant mercy even as a cloud brings benefit to humanity. Another annotation is that whenever He makes His presence felt, there would be a soothing aroma in the atmosphere. A third refers to the Divine state to which a devotee can rise.

It is said {{that selfless service will provide men with the grace of God and thereby enjoy Bliss within}} (4). Every devotee who undertakes pilgrimage should first take a bath in such a well or a tank as this would ensure not only bodily purity but acquisition of spiritual knowledge and also the elimination of sins and vicious thoughts in the mind. Then he should enter the precincts of the temple and offer worship. (Wed., Mar. 3, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) This heart is not the human's physical heart. It is more close to head or mind and may be called a spiritual heart.

(2) There are millions of Mantras but in reality there is only ONE Mantra.

If God is ONE and if all people are, in nuclei (their souls or spirits),

also same and ONE, there ought to be only ONE true Mantra. And that is "Naam" or name of God. This is just like from an ocean of water (God)

there becomes billions of water bodies in the form of ponds, rivers, lakes, pools,

seas, and many other water bodies. But the water is ONE; the One in different shapes and sizes is called by different names, that in reality

does not make the water different. All Mantras are good, they have something to offer to its chanters, but none of them can provide God realization unless the ONE which is (not uttered or chanted, but) meditated

upon is known. That is the true Mantra or Word of God, as said, "Mantra

Tantra Sab Jhuth Hai, Naa Koi Bhramo Sansaar; Saar Shabad Jaane Binaa, Koe

Na Utaare Paar." Means, "All the Mantras and tantras (mystics or magics)

are false, O'People don't be fooled in it; without knowing the true Word (of

God), no body can sail (you) through (your life)."

(3) Krishna said in Gita, "Those who adore or worship "Purvaj" or ancestors

goes to ancestors, those who worship deities goes to deities. But those who

worship me come straight to me." But there is no that Krishna now, who shall we worship? He further said, "who so ever worship various deities, I

go in to those deities and give those worshippers through those deities what

ever worshippers pray for." If it is so, then first, why worship God second

handly? and second, deities will only give first handly what they have. Like worshippers of Laxmi can only get wealth but not knowledge, or that of

Saraswati can only get knowledge but not wealth. And that too by the

mercy
and will of God. How can one expect a medical doctor to design a
bridge? If
he does chances are he'll kill many people. How can one get mango by
sowing
a bamboo tree? So why not worship, pray, meditate, Love, and be
devoted to
God directly first hand.

(4) Selfless service to God is the key to obtain bliss and joy. With
Love
and devotion the knowledge automatically follows suit, overflowing
even if
the aspirant does not want it. They may choose not to use it and remain
immersed in the infinite bliss, happiness and joy of devotion and
service to
God. Or they may choose to spread the glory of God.

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Religion can make one's mind steady

Where is the need for religion and for what purpose should it be
followed in
this life if, according to the view that the Law of Action and Reaction
plays its role under which every happening takes place as decided by
the
Almighty and that we cannot alter them. Competent authorities have
answered
this doubt in unambiguous terms. Religion is the source which can make
our
minds steady and derive the capacity to face trials even if our plans
fail.
Our problems arise because of our unfulfilled wants. Religious
exercises
will enable men to destroy their unnecessary needs or keep them to the
minimum. All religions of the world have been trying their utmost to
make
men morally upright.
The Bhagavad Gita says that a stable person is one who is not disturbed
by
others when they look at him or if he happens to look at them. The mind
can
remain under control only if he worships God regularly. To make it
steady,

meditation with Mantras has been prescribed. {{Mantras can be uttered in three ways, according to Jainism. They can be chanted in such a manner that others can hear them; lip movements will be there but words spelt out cannot be heard and thirdly, chanting "mentally" within oneself}} (1). This most important part of religious austerities implies that even when severe trials knock at a devoted person, he will be least concerned. Religion creates an atmosphere of detachment and when once a person is tired of the cycles of births and deaths, he will divert his attention towards seeking salvation. An excellent example of attachment was narrated: A rich merchant, on his death-bed, asked his accountant about the balance of his resources. He was told that his wealth was enough to feed 71 generations. The businessman then was worried as to what would happen to the 72nd generation. He never thought that his future grandchildren will have hands to work and earn. There are two recipes to be free from attachment: "I belong to no one and nobody belongs to me; I am not the body but I am the soul." In order to see that birth as a human being will be fruitful, one should follow {{the right type of religion, tread the correct path, read the right type of scriptural texts}} (2) and cultivate ennobling virtues. Even the adherents to righteousness may at times be puzzled to find some rolling in wealth though they have not been carrying out the prescribed spiritual guidelines and some experiencing happiness and immersed in joy while several others are steeped in poverty. The contributory factors for such differences cannot be a matter of chance. A man's prosperity or adversity is the result of his past actions. (Thurs. Mar. 04, '99)*****

COMMENTARY

(1) There are many other ways of chanting Mantras -such as with a rosary in hand, etc. There can be many other ways devised to chant a Mantra. If all humans have the same ONE soul or spirit in them, then there has to be only one best way to chant Mantra and that has to be the correct way also.

Human body is considered as made of Akash, Air, Fire, Water and Earth.

All these elements are present outside also. It is said, "Jo Brhamaande So Pinde." Means, "Whatever is outside in this universe is also inside this

body." Therefore, it can also be said "Jo Pinde So Brhamaande," i.e., what

ever is inside this human body is also outside in this universe. A

Mantra

chanted with total void "Shunya" or Akash is superior to that chanted with

air we breath, which is subsequently superior to one which is chanted with

fire -as during "Yagya," and so on. Thus chanting a Mantra aloud with a

rosary in hand is the least useful way; unfortunately it is the most common

way also. Kabir said, "Maalaa Ferat Yug Bhayaa, Gayaa Na Man Kaa Fer; Kar

Kaa Manaka Chhodi Ke, Man Kaa Mankaa Fer." Means, "An era passed chanting

Mantra with a rosary in hand (but) the mind did not yet got purified; leave

the rosary and begin to clean the mind." He then negating the previous statement advises to even go beyond the mind by saying, "Maalaa To Kar

Me

Phire, Jeebh Phire Mukh Maaheen; Manavaa To Chahun Disi Phire, Ye To Sumiran

Naaheen." i.e., the rosary moves in the hand, tongue moves in the mouth; the

mind wanders all around, this is not the way to remember God. He then advises a more advance or correct way and warns people, "Saans Saans Pe

Naam

Le, Ek Bhi Saans Naa Khoy; Kyaa Jaane Is Saans Kaa, Aavan Hoy Naa Hoy." Means, "Remember God's Word with every breath (Air -the most superior,

next

to Akash), do not waste even one breath (without remembering God); who knows when this breath could cease." Thus we should settle on the second best way. An aspirant of spirituality will eventually get the best way to meditate -i.e., the state of trance, if he or she is zealous to know God. However, still one has to know that Naam, or Word of God which he can meditate upon with every breath, as indicated by Kabir.

(2) There is no right or wrong, correct or incorrect, true or false in this world. There is only ONE -Truth, which is right and which is correct. Mere absence or lack of Truth becomes false, the lack of right becomes wrong, just like the absence of light is called darkness. Anything we do, or think which helps us realize God, which takes us a step closer to know the Truth is right, is correct and is true to liberate us from the bondage of darkness and put us in to light. Spirit has then no attachment to the body and the aspirant of Truth realizes that he is not the body he is the soul, the soul is God, as said, "Aham Brhamaasme; Ayamaatmaa Brhama."

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Characteristics of a true devotee (1)

Scriptures have given various definitions to the term devotion. One can cite numerous examples from the lives of saints and sages to give illustrations for different kinds of devotions practiced by them. The company of these men has helped the devout people attain distinguishing attributes and their influence will certainly lead to changes in their very outlook and lead them on the right path. The Garuda Purana has listed eight different characteristics of a devotee as expounded by the Lord Himself. The first one is to serve sages and saints who are His true representatives. The second is to worship the Lord without

any inhibitions. The next is to personally offer prayers to the Lord without seeking the help of intermediaries. The Lord does not like His devotees to exhibit pomp and show while offering worship and austerity is the fourth attribute. The next is the recitation of scriptures, especially Puranas which sing His glory - and to get deeply moved by the righteousness, valor and grace exhibited by the Lord as explained in these works. This is listed as the sixth quality of a devotee. The seventh trait is to always think of the Almighty as a true savior. The last characteristic is not to seek anything else from the Lord than the service to His Holy Feet. The Garuda Purana has declared unequivocally that any one who possessed these eight attributes would be considered as a true devotee of the Lord irrespective of class, caste and other distinctions. Like the cow which removes all the dirt and other bad elements from the skin of a new-born calf with its tongue, the Lord removes all the bad qualities of a man and makes Him fit to obtain His grace. The Lord also does not expect the true devotee to offer prayers extensively with the attendant extravagant display. All that he wants is true devotion on the part of a man and He is immensely pleased if he offers prayers with leaves, flowers, fruits and water. Even if all these things could not be got ready, he can offer prayer with the help of even water which is easily available. The Lord Himself, during His incarnation as Krishna, has declared that all people can get closer to Him by hearing or reading the Bhagavatam. When the Lord Krishna was about to leave this world after fulfilling the objectives of his incarnation, the saint, Uddhava, and others lamented as to who will be there to guide them. {{The Lord said one could see Him in the form of Srimad Bhagavatham}} (2). That is why this work is held in great esteem by

one and all. (Fri. Mar. 05,'99)*****

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Ramayan says nine qualities of devotees, "First, the company of saints; second, keen in reading and telling scriptures or stories of God; third, service to the lotus feet of spiritual master or Guru; fourth, to speak up the glory of God with a guileless heart; fifth, chanting Guru Mantra with steadfastness; sixth, constantly engaged in Karma with detachment; seventh, seeing the God in everybody and considering saints more than God; eighth, contentment in whatever one gets and never even in dream, see others fault; ninth, simplicity with a strong belief in God without guile and equanimity.

The Gita gives a similar qualities, and I imagine other scriptures like Bible, Koran, etc. must be giving a similar account.

(2) Thanks God some people may not worship and pray to that scripture, as done in Sikhism where the scriptural book "Guru Granth Sahib" is worshiped and we people pray to that holy book. Is it going to listen to our prayers and give us what we pray for? I think only a live person can help another live person, and of course in spirituality only alive spiritual master who is free from the bondage of the cycle of death and birth can make some one free from it.

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Tue, 2 Mar 1999 12:57:12 -0500

ARTICLE

{{Wisdom alone can liberate man}} (1)

All embodied beings in the world are made up of the three qualities (gunas): sattva, rajas and tamas. Though all the three gunas are present together, their proportion lends the distinctive nature to an individual. Moreover, a person may be influenced by any of the three at a particular time which is responsible for his moods. Even if someone is essentially sattvic it is evident that he will not always have a peaceful frame of mind.

The gunas are a manifestation of Prakriti (matter). The soul (Atman) at the time of creation becomes embodied due to contact with Prakriti. The three qualities are responsible for the bondage of the soul and make the soul forget its essential imperishable and blissful nature by its identification with the body.

Of the three gunas, sattva is flawless and illuminating, rajas is of the nature of passion and attachment, and tamas, deluding and sluggish. Even though sattva endows a person with sterling qualities, it binds him by identifying with joy. When a person is under the influence of rajoguna he becomes an extrovert, actively involved in worldly pursuits with attachment to success in his enterprises, to the extent of being selfish. The involvement is so much that he loses sight of other values in life.

Under the influence of rajas attachment results due to active involvement which is the cause of bondage; in the case of one who is influenced by tamoguna there is delusion due to total identification with the body. Such a person is prone to laziness, excessive sleep and error in judgment. A person who goes all the way to Kanyakumari to watch the sunrise which is unique there, but fails to get up in the morning and misses it because of his laziness, is a case in point. Though his intention is good, he is unable to translate it into action because of the influence of tamoguna.

On the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that under the spell of tamas a person misses many beautiful things in life even when endowed with a perfect body, mind and intellect. Though all the three gunas cause bondage, the difference in their intensity can be understood by comparison. Sattva is like a bow-knot which can be easily untied; rajas like a reef-knot which is slightly difficult to undo and tamas like a complicated knot requiring much effort.

Whichever guna is predominant it sways the mind and hence only when the clear wisdom of the Self shines, do the gunas leave their hold on man. Understanding one's disposition one must act upon them to get over their influence. (Sat., Feb. 27, '99)

COMMENTARY

(1) True, but how does it (the wisdom) come and what it is? Wisdom is that thought and sensation of Truth which comes in mind from the higher plane of spirit or Truth through the intellect. It bypasses ego and is not affected by mind and sense organs. It is contrary to the knowledge which is obtained from the lower physical planes through 5 senses of knowledge (sound, touch, sight, taste and smell) obtained through ear, skin, eyes, tongue and nose (Inlets) and 5 senses of karma or actions through hands, legs, mouth, visarjan and prajanan organs (outlets). Knowledge fades away with time due to memory loss and eventually it perishes with the body. A man with knowledge is like a computer which more or less retain what is fed in it.

Wisdom is like a human, where ideas and thoughts can come by its own.

Wisdom is close to the intuition. That is why they say, "Pothi Padha

Jug

Bhayaa, Pandit Bhayaa Na Koy; Dhhaeee Akshar Prem Kaa Padhe So Pandit Hoy."

Means, "One has spent the era in reading scriptures (but) no body could become wise; One who reads the two-and-a-half letters of LOVE becomes wise

(or have wisdom). Therefore, Love and devotion is crucial to have

wisdom
and realization.

How does it come? When a person has guileless heart, is free of three
gunas
(going in trance), have done away with vices -like anger, lust, greed,
envy,
jealousy, pride, stealing, deception, sin, hypocrisy, etc. and has
treasured
virtues -like always speaking truth, humility, respect the Lord in
every
individual human and His all creation, piousness, kindness,
forgiveness,
contentment, contemplation, trance, etc. The degree and frequency of
wise
thoughts coming to mind depend upon the absence or presence of one or
more
of these and other vices or virtues respectively. With emotions, deep
love
and devotion to God one becomes wise and wisdom alone is helpful in God
realization; no amount of knowledge makes the reach there although
knowledge
do increase the curiosity and analytical strength of the individual to
know
God.

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Chaitanya, savior of mankind

About five centuries ago, the whole of India, with the exception of two
areas, was a vast territory where the process of constant hammering was
being adopted to shatter Hindu religion into pieces, and cast it to the
winds. Such a tyrannical oppression by evil forces necessitated God to
incarnate on earth. Apart from this task, which is simple for Him, His
greater eagerness was to please the numerous devotees who wanted His
presence amidst them. One such manifestation was His appearance as a
great
reformer and guide, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

A non-violent fighter and a dauntless rebel who fought superstitions,
he
saved the erring souls. There was none to challenge when he marched on
foot
all over India carrying with him the eternal flaming torch and flying
the
flag of Truth and Justice in his hands. This savior of mankind removed
the

sorrows of people, and brought them joy.

Chaitanya's prescription to humanity was the singing of the glorious name of

Lord Krishna. In his mission of spreading Divine love, he adopted the instrument of recitation of {{God's name}} (1) to forge unity and make men rise in their spiritual stature.

The Divine name wipes out the sins and polishes the mirror of the soul, extinguishes the raging conflagration of worldly life, provides Bliss and chastens the entire outlook of a person.

In 1486 A.D., Chaitanya made his advent at Mayapur and his religious life

unfolds unique pathological symptoms of devotion, which are unparalleled in

history. His ecstatic dance and the sweet chanting of the Krishna's name

touched the hearts of everyone who came to him. Scholars acknowledged his

Divinity and millions embraced his creed of "Naam Sankirtana". That the human body is like a boat, the first and foremost use of which is to

carry

one across the ocean of life and death to the shore of immortality, was one

of his messages; today being Chaitanya's advent day.

Towards the end of his life, after his 46th year, Chaitanya's

"love-in-separation" for God reached such a pitch of intensity that he gradually lost all touch with public life, spending his days in a state

of

{{intense devotion to his deity and in beatific visions}} (2). By {{the grace of Krishna}} (3), even the ordinary person can reach the shore of the

ocean of devotion. (Tues., Mar. 02, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) God's name! What is God's name? Is it Raam? Is it Krishna? or Is it

Allah? or Christ or Buddha? All these are various local names of God. Simply, because the Truth in ONE -One which is constant, eternal,

unchanging, unborn, undying. The one which changes by the (minute or) time and the place can not be the Truth. God is ONE and only ONE -eternal, infinite, beyond time and place, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. If He is ONE, His true name also has to be ONE. And IT can not be other, else IT will not be the truth. It can not be the name of a body, substance, idol, or deity, etc. in which IT assumes a shape or form, just like the clay is same in all pots -make it a tumbler, a kamandal, a pitcher, a jug, a spoon, a cup or anything else. The God is there in all humans. It is said, "Ghat Ghat Me Meraa Saainyaa, Suno Ghat Na Koy; Balihaari Vaa Ghat Kee, Jaamen Pragat Hoy." Means, "My Lord, God is in everybody, there is no one without Him; I surrender to ONE in which it manifests or incarnates." Thus God's name in ONE. That ought to be known. Then only we can know Him. It is said, "Raam Raam Sab Koi Kahe, Naam Na Jaane koy; Jo Koi Jaane Naam Kahe, Naam Kahaave Soi." Means, "Everybody says "Raam" "Raam" -the names of God, (but) no body knows the Name; one who knows the (true) name (of God), spread His name and is known as Name (of God)." That is the name of the Atma, the spirit or God. That one has to be known and that one has to be obtained in oneself. One has to embody Him, that NAME of God in oneself. That's one's Dharma -"Dharati-so-Dharma."

(2) When the devotion to Naam comes, Naam becomes deity. Of course, once one is devoted to true name "Sat-Naam" one gets a bountiful of joy and bliss.

(3) The grace of Krishna! Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was incarnated on this earth approximately 500 years ago, and Krishna was incarnated in "Dwapar Yug" approximately before 7000 years ago, when the onset of Kaliyug started.

"The grace of Krishna" is an analogy; since Krishna was once there, just like Rama, or Jesus, or Buddha, or Bahauallah, or Kabir or Nanak, etc. were once there, Chaitanya call and compare his God with the Krishna. It is just like calling a very nice fellow as "Heera" or "Precious" (He is precious, or He is a Heera) does not really make his name as Heera or Precious. The same case was of Meera. Everybody know Meera's God was Krishna, but only Meera and some few others knew and know who was her real God through whom she got devotion and knew the true name of God.

With best wishes.
Sincerely

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Fri, 26 Feb 1999 08:12:08 -0500

ARTICLE

Providence cannot be thwarted

The scriptural authority of Sanatana dharma, the Vedas, which were revealed to the sages, are in the form of commandments. The rituals and practices which are enjoined in them are obligatory and have to be followed according to one's station in life. One has to practice them with faith that they have been prescribed for the ultimate good of humanity as the results may not be discernible. But, the path of Nama sankirtana (singing the Divine names) is easy for all to adopt and the result of its practice can be felt immediately.

While in the other ages, austerities, Yajna and meditation had to be practiced stringently to realize God, in this Kali yuga, Nama sankirtana can give the same result. The lives of devotees who realized God through this

method attest to its efficacy and hence serve as inspiration. {{One such devotee who was just five years- old}} (1) when the Almighty incarnated just to protect him moved by his sterling devotion, was Prahlada.

It is said that the manifestation of the Almighty as Narasimha proved that His incarnations were always due to His will, though they were always undertaken for the sake of His devotees. When the celestials submitted to the Almighty to intercede when they could not tolerate the troubles Hiranyakasipu was causing to one and all, He promised them that He would intercede at the appropriate time.

Hiranyakasipu hated the Lord because he held Him responsible for his brother Hiranyaksha's death when He assumed the form of Varaha to kill him. So he undertook intense penance and obtained a boon from Brahma, the creator, thinking that he had outsmarted everyone by getting a boon that no being would be able to kill him. He ordered that no one should utter the Lord's name in his kingdom and declared himself as the Lord. But the Divine plan unfolded in a manner to prove that it is not possible to thwart Providence.

It was to him who hated the Almighty that the great devotee Prahlada was born. His devotion became apparent right from his birth as {{he had the good fortune of listening to the Lord's glory even while in the womb of his mother Kayatu to whom Sage Narada related the Divine glory.}} (2)

Prahlada's devotion to God grew in leaps and bounds much to the chagrin of his teacher who tried his best to correct him to please his father. The child escaped several threats to his life due to God's grace when Hiranyakasipu tried to kill him and finally He incarnated as Narasimha to protect His devotee. (Wed. Feb. 24, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Age is no bar or no criteria for God realization. Prahlad got realization at 5 years age (some says at 15 years); Dhruva got it at a young age of 6 years; Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ got it in their twenties; Tulsi got in his middle age; etc. Actually, earlier the better.

Because it is smart to get out of darkness and illusion of this world and know the Truth as soon as one can.

(2) Prahlad got the word of God from Narad while he was still in his mother's womb. Does this not tell us that the "Satguru" -the free pure soul, initiate the souls of His disciples and not their bodies?

Actually, the Satguru is the soul of the disciple and the disciple becomes the Satguru's body after God realization. Thus all this reading and writings of

Bible, Koran, Gita, Ramayan, Puranas, Srutis, Smratis, etc. provide encouragement and motivation in people to know the Truth, but it does not provide that spark to ignite the internal fire which when explodes burn the

whole body; where as the external fire (by reading these scriptures) can

only char different parts of the body yet leaving the mind, intellect and

ego intact. The mind and all ten organs of senses of knowledge and action

still remain at work and the anger, lust, greed, pride, etc., are not burnt,

how can then one know the Truth, the Lord God, who is beyond all this?

With best wishes

Sincerely

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The Self, source of infinite bliss

Man finds himself at the crossroads often in life because there is some decision or the other which has to be taken even in day- to-day matters. One

cannot escape from exercising one's choice in such situations. Animals and

birds do not have this problem and they follow their natural instincts,

but, man being endowed with the freedom of choice, he has to exercise his option, but this involves moral responsibility. So, there is a dilemma even in trivial matters because the decision one has to take may not be always palatable, which naturally gives rise to mental conflicts.

Arjuna faced this kind of moral dilemma at the beginning of the Mahabharata war. He was in a fix whether to engage in the war or not. The answer to his predicament was not a simple "yes or no". It entailed the teaching of the Gita by Lord Krishna who had to expound the subtlest of all subjects - {{Adhyatma}} (1) vidya (knowledge of the Self) - to resolve his dilemma.

Though the teaching of the Lord in the Gita is an intrinsic whole, every chapter conveys a profound teaching and thus is important. When a chapter is treated as important as it is from a particular standpoint from which one is studying the text. The third chapter, for instance, is an excellent guide on management.

On the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that the 14th chapter of this text gave a clear understanding of the human mind about which unfortunately humans know precious little. The problems of the mind can be solved only by rising above the level of the mind.

If a person thinks that he can tackle them by circumvention, he is mistaken because it is not possible. This chapter teaches how a person can insulate himself from the afflictions of the world even while actively engaged in worldly life. This can be likened to using an umbrella when it is raining; one cannot do anything about the rain, but, can certainly prevent oneself from getting drenched.

Lord Krishna in the 13th chapter expounds the association between the insentient matter and the sentient beings (Prakrti-Purusha) which is the basis of creation, though He does not expound it in great detail here. So the subject is once again taken up for discussion in the next chapter. {{The sentient Self by association with the insentient body identifies itself with it and in the process forgets its true blissful nature}} (2).

But those who understand the nature of Prakrti remain unafflicted by it and become one with the Supreme, who is bliss incarnate. This leads to fulfillment as there is realization of one's blissful nature. They no longer seek happiness from material things. (Thu. Feb. 25, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Adhyatma means study or experience ("Adhyan") of the self ("Atma"). Knowledge comes about when one studies and experience IT (the self). The important thing here is "Atma" or self or spirit. But people usually misunderstand "Adhyatma" as Veda's study or a branch of Hindu religious study. Similarly "Svadhya" actually means the "Adhyan" of "Sva". Sva means self or spirit; but most people know it as self study or study from books without the help of any living being or teacher. They do take the help of books to study, eyes to read, a language to understand, etc. but still call it self study. Who is that self who studies it? Atma is eternal, it was there before Gita (as we know it -a scriptural book) was told or written, and people like Durvasa Muni, Vashishtha Muni, etc. knew Adhyatma vidya much before that.

(2) This happens due to illusion or "Maya". The self or spirit takes a form due to "Yogmaya" and thinks that IT is the body. In reality IT is not

the
body. The material body changes, grows, gets old, changes form and is
useless without the self or spirit; where as the spirit or self is
eternal.

It is not matter, it is not even energy, it is the source of matter and
energy. It was there in the beginning and it never changes, grows,
gets
old, or dies or changes forms. That is how the Truth is defined. One
which
is constant, changeless, infinite and eternal. We must try our best to
know
IT -the God.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Tue, 23 Feb 1999 12:46:35 -0500

Dedicate all actions to the Almighty

The mind is responsible for man's joys and sorrows. A person cannot
lead a
happy life if he does not understand what gives him happiness. If life
is
mechanical, frustrations are bound to be there, as it is apparent that
worldly life is not unalloyed bliss. One should be equipped mentally to
face
life. For this it is essential to understand what life in the world
entails.

Birth and death are intrinsic to life in the world as these are the
corollary of the working of Karma (result of actions in previous
lives),
which has also caused this particular birth. There is no escape from
death
for every being born in this world. The Yakshaprasna section in the
Mahabharata says, "Day after day there enter into the Temple of Death,
countless lives. Looking at this spectacle, the rest of them, (those
who
remain) believe themselves to be permanent and immortal. Can anything
be
more wonderful than this?"

{{When beset with problems death should not be looked upon as an
escape}}

(1). {{Human birth is a rare opportunity}} (2) given to one, the significance of which must never be forgotten. Within this cycle of transmigration man has the freedom to realize eternal bliss in this birth by orienting his life to the spiritual goal. Re-orientation to this goal will reflect in his outlook and also in his actions.

It is said that a human being had to make all efforts to understand that he is the Self (Atman) and realize the bliss of the Self. The mind should be attuned to this ideal even when it is preoccupied with worldly activities.

One should start each day with gratitude that it is due to God's grace that one has the strength, physically and mentally, to enjoy and perform all actions. This attitude will motivate one to dedicate all actions to God.

The manner in which one must regulate one's life is prescribed in the scriptures and the practices like prayer and meditation enjoined in them, are all meant to develop concentration of mind which is the basis of spiritual life.

By orienting one's mind to God all actions and thoughts will become spontaneous and involved, which will result in great joy. {{One enjoys every little act when one develops this attitude}} (3). When there is involvement in life then one's joy is reflected in one's relationships also. For instance, if {{one is committed to speaking truth}} (4) such a person will think of the consequences and will not hurt others in the process of abiding by it. So also while engaging in noble acts like charity one shares whatever one has with others joyfully and not out of compulsion. (Tue. Feb. 23, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Seeking one's escape from problems by death is the biggest sin one

can do and even a thought of it pushes one far behind and backward in his journey to self realization.

(2) Ramayan says, "Bade Bhaagya Maanush Tan Paavaa, Sur Durlabh Sab Granthan Gaavaa." Means, "Due to great fortune the human body is obtained, all scriptures state that even for deities also it is difficult to get human life." The folly is that due to ignorance he worships deities and neglect God whom all deities also pray to give them human life. Human life is simply great because only in this life one is free to act while reaping the fruits (sweet or sour) of his previous actions. All other species, including deities, demigods, demons, etc. are only bound to enjoy or suffer according to their pious or sinful acts done in their past lives respectively.

(3) When one is fully engrossed in God, having surrendered and dedicated all his actions to God, he is bound to look at the world positively and praise the Lord in all situations. Even if one gets a prick from a thorn or hurt himself minorly, he sees the reason for it, the benefit he gets out of it, and he thanks God for it. Lamas of Bhutan and Sikkim pray God to give them hard time so that they can remember Him more and more, pray Him more and more. When such a person's mother, or son, or spouse dies, he would see God's plan in it and would see positively and accept the loss more easily, instead of blaming and cursing God. He would not be able to get them back to life, no matter how hard he tries. He sees the Atman which is eternal.

(4) Always speaking Truth has no parallel, it is the biggest penance, biggest righteousness, and is an assured way to God realization., One who always speaks truth, although he does not usually tell anything about the

future, but if he tells it ought to come true. All the forces of Nature has to fall in line to make it happen. Such a person is a rare saint, as said, "Saanch Baraabar Tap Nahin, Jhooth Baraabar Paap; Jaanke Rhday Saanch Hain Taaken Rhday Aap." Means, "God lives in that heart which has truth, because there is no penance greater than speaking truth, as there is no sin bigger than lying." Hence, such a saint is known as "Satguru" -the master who speaks truth, shows truth and make a sincere seeker of truth experience it in himself.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Mon, 22 Feb 1999 12:56:50 -0500

Mind should be kept under control

The attitude and behavior of a person, impulses, emotions, moods and even body movements depend on the functioning of the mind. In the vast majority of men it is allowed to run wild or wander. That is why holy texts and saints who explain their significance, always focus men's attention on the imperative need to escape the tyranny of the mind. Instead of allowing it to be one's master, it should be tamed to act as one's servant. {{One of the ways to control its sway is to be closely associated with saintly souls who will direct men's activities towards God and make them think only about virtue.}} (1)

Saints who have purified their minds by discipline are centers of great force. The impure, weak minds will be unconsciously drawn towards their teachings, while mixing with them. The influence exerted by them is such that those who approach them will also learn how to discipline themselves and observe certain rigorous rules of spiritual practices. An extraordinary example of the saints' role was found in the case of one among them,

known
for his piety, having taken care of a peacock in his gardens. A poacher
shot
a few rounds from his gun but not a single bullet injured the bird.
Those
around told him that even if a hundred pellets are shot they would not
cause
any injury to it, as it has received the saint's grace.

Narrating the experience of some saints, it is said that a
millionaire's son
was found in a cage, walking on his hands and legs. His mind had been
affected and in spite of being the only son of the wealthy man, nothing
could be done as the boy at times behaved violently. Likewise, in
another
place, they saw a cot and bed costing millions of rupees, using which
their
owner could not be assured of more than the normal amount of sleep (He
was
later found beheaded). Again, in one of the world's biggest factories,
they
were told of the efficiency of a car that could be 90 per cent safe
against
accidents. But the producers could not be sure of the efficiency of the
human element because the driver's mind may not be free from stress and
perhaps he may be even under the influence of liquor. All these show
that
mind should be kept under control not making others obey its command.

{{Man's duty is therefore to realize the self and know the nature of
the
soul, subdue the mind and seek the company of saints, who will help him
in
getting rid of his ego and the "I" consciousness (claiming "I have done
it")
and cultivate noble thought, and experience peace and bliss within,
rediscovering the divine elements. Saints are great purifiers and "sat
sang"
gives a new spiritual turn of the mind.}} (2) (Mon. Feb. 22, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) This is a proven way. Because in this when the mind always thinks
about

the Lord God, there remains no time to think about zillions of other worldly things. This is known as "Ekaagrataa", means, "the mind is leading ("agra") towards ONE ("Ek"), hence there is none else. When Meera was asked by Raja Bhoj of Mewar, why did she cross the boarder and stepped in to his kingdom, she merely replied, "This land is of Shri Krishna", "I am of Shri Krishna", and "you are of Shri Krishna." She was seeing only Shri Krishna everywhere. This, however, can only be possible through a saint.

Therefore, until one meets a saint, one can practice to concentrate his mind by practicing the following simple (physical-mental) exercise: Count one to 100 at the normal pace and time it. Now count backward from 100 to one making sure of the accuracy and time it. Repeat it until you can count 100 to 1, of course accurately, in the same time as you counted 1 to 100. Repeat the whole exercise at a faster pace, i.e., reduce the time of counting 1 to 100 and practicing backward counting to match with the shorter time. This is a proven technique to concentrate and control one's mind.

Next step will be to gear it towards God, by chanting a mantra. Try "Om Namoh Shivaay." This will surely make your circumstances and conditions conducive for you to meet a saint.

Finally, then, follow his advice and guidance.

(2) To realize self: that is the cause of the soul to take the human form, and that is also the purpose of the human life. Otherwise, all living beings take birth, breath, eat, grow and die. Imagine, when we can do or know all this (everything) outside, yet without knowing our own self or soul, or spirit or God which is inside us in our own self, and due to which only we are able to know all this outside world, what we can do knowing the doer, the self, the God. Infinite. Otherwise, There is a only a hollowness

inside with good appearance outside only to collapse sooner or later.
That
is why we accomplish nothing at the end of our lives. But if we know
our
own self, the living being, the spirit, the God inside us then we can
do or
know anything outside and we do not collapse. We burst and spread the
word
of God. We have accomplished the goal of the human life. The mind is
automatically controlled. It merges in to the intellect, the ego, and
the
self or spirit and we can go in to trance. This is the assured way of
getting supreme bliss and happiness. At the end, our will merges in to
the
will of God and we can help others obtaining the same supreme bliss and
eternal happiness which we have experienced only through the help of a
saint.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Friday, February 19, 1999 4:03 PM

God-realization is goal of human life

> "Have you seen God," was the question raised by Narendra (who later
became
>
> Swami Vivekananda) when he met Sri Ramakrishna, to which the reply
was "If
>
> you take efforts, I shall try to help you". God is everywhere but
there is
>
> greater sanctity in temples. These holy centers have been once the
seats
> of
> various saints and have been visited since then by many who had
offered
> their
> prayers and hence some spiritual energy is stored therein.
>
> The message of Ramakrishna (whose birthday fell on this Thursday) to
> humanity
> was "search for God". The goal of human life should be to realize
God.
> This

> is possible by developing detachment even as the hard skin of a jack
fruit
>
> can be easily peeled by applying oil to one's hands. It means that a
> person
> should not get attached to worldly pleasures. Devotion is like the
oil. An
>
> aspirant of spiritual practices should remain steadfast in his
endeavors
> even
> as the needle of a compass in a ship always shows only one direction
> though
> the vessel may travel anywhere and face any situation. Even as a
farmer
> who
> irrigates his field the whole day but finds that the crops have not
> received
> the water because the quantity had all gone into the numerous burrows
of
> rodents in the bunds en route, one should not waste one's energy in
> worldly
> activities while undertaking spiritual exercises. Just set up your
> priorities and aim at the top priority.
>
> Saints and messengers of God are more compassionate towards mankind
and
> Ramakrishna had great concern for the poor. Once during his
pilgrimage, he
>
> saw people in a village extremely poor and hence asked a wealthy man
to
> immediately arrange for the supply of food and cloths to them;
otherwise
> he
> would not continue his trip. He also refrained from taking food from
> people
> whose character was bad. Devotees should adopt the path he had shown.
>
> Ramakrishna directed his spiritual power for the upliftment of
humanity as
> a
> whole. He was concerned about the need to turn people's ways so that
they
> may
> reach higher levels. Every individual possesses tremendous power but

he is
 >
 > not aware of it and Ramakrishna goaded and entreated every one to be
 aware
 > of
 > it. He was an incarnation of God and could remove our problems in a
 trice.
 > He
 > asked people to remember that God was behind us in our efforts. The
 > difference between an ordinary man and an incarnation is that the
 former
 > goes
 > into oblivion but the latter will be remembered forever.
 {{Ramakrishna was
 >
 > the Lord in human form}} (1) and has revealed himself thus.
 {{Whosoever
 > went
 > to him got all the doubts cleared}} (2). "Whoever thinks of me will
 get
 > rid
 > of his difficulties," he had said. (Sat. Feb. 20, '99)
 > *****
 > COMMENTARY
 >
 > Dear Friend:
 >
 > (1) Ramakrishna was and certainly he was for Vivekananda. However,
 he is
 >
 > not there any more. we have his memories only. The fact that he was
 is
 > enough to tell us that a saint is a true Lord in human form. Some
 even
 > says
 > they are higher than God. It sounds funny that anybody can be higher
 than
 >
 > God, but what is the difference between God and one who knows Him
 (the
 > God)
 > fully inside-out. Is there? Ramayan says, "Jo Janat So Dehi Janaai,
 > Janat
 > Tumhin Tumhin Hoi Jaaee." Means, "Those who knows can make you
 known,
 > knowing you becomes you." Anybody with qualification of a president

can
 > become a president. However, there is only one president and all
 others
 > accept him so. Therefore, a saint who knows God can show God to
 anybody
 > of
 > course with later's efforts.
 >
 > (2) This is one of the qualities of a saint. You may have a host of
 > questions (or doubts) to ask but as you go in his territory some are
 > answered
 > by your inner conscious or through books, people, etc. When you go
 > further
 > closer to him another few are answered by you or some one you meet,
 the
 > remaining ones are automatically answered by his disciples when you
 go to
 > a
 > saints ashram, and finally one or two if still left are answered
 when you
 >
 > see him or bow down to him in reverence.
 >
 > With best wishes.
 > Sincerely

> ++++++

Tue, 16 Feb 1999 11:44:12 -0500

Supreme Being, the first

The distinctive traits of the messengers of God are the spiritual
 knowledge
 they have gained through enormous personal sacrifice and the moral
 purity
 they have developed by virtue of strict austerities. These saintly
 persons,
 who have been zealously safeguarding hoary spiritual traditions and
 upholding them in their own lives will only be too keen to transmit the
 wisdom they have gained to those who approach them. They will never
 deviate
 from the path their predecessors had laid.

Those who are considered proficient in spiritual knowledge by virtue of
 their mastery over the Divine revelations have clearly determined as to
 who
 among the various deities is Supreme. Their firm declaration was made

after
deep analysis of God's own words and the subsequent annotation by
sages,
saints and seers. The most significant message by the preceptors is
{the
total dependence of men on the Supreme Being and that they are His
servants}} (1). Vaishnavism has thus had its origin from the Divine
Couple
who handed over its chief principles to Their immediate attendants who
taught them to succeeding masters. The Supreme Being, who is the first
teacher, conveyed the knowledge to others. (Tuesday, February 16,'99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Man is totally dependent on the Supreme Being, yet he does not
realize
it. Due to his ego he becomes the doer of things, or he thinks he does
everything. In Ramayan, it is said, "Parbas Jeev, Svabas Bhagwanta;
Jeev
Anek, Ek Srikantaa." Means, "The life is dependent on others, God is
not, He
is in His own self; lives are many but the God is ONE." We are puppets
in
the hands of God, in the hands of destiny. Yet due to illusion we
think
that we do everything and are not dependent on anybody or the Supreme
Being, as said in Ramayan, "Maya Basya Jeev Abhimaani; Ish Basya Maya
Gun
Khaani." Means, "In the grip of illusion life gets the ego, (but) in
the
influence of God, the same ego becomes the mines of virtues." So if we
just
divert our energies, interest, and ego towards knowing the Truth, all
these
can become our assets and we will not be dwelling in false through out
our
whole life; otherwise the same factors become our bondage of life and
we
could never know the Truth until the end of our life. It is not the
end of
life, it is just the beginning of other and we sure don't know that
what
kind of life that would be. Hence, is the importance of human life
-which

is "Sat", "Chit", and "Anand", provided we realize this Truth.
However,
we can't realize this until first some realized soul does not tell us
how
to, and then until we have requisite longing to see God. The supreme
teacher is within us, He also being the first teacher in the beginning
of
the life, but we need to know it from a spiritual teacher who know Him.

With best wishes

Sincerely

+++++

Mon, 15 Feb 1999 13:16:07 -0500

Surrender, easy means to liberation

A text attains the stature of a scripture if its subject matter
fulfills

certain conditions. A scriptural text should deal with five basic
themes:

the nature of human beings, the Supreme Being who is the end to be
attained,

the means for attaining the Lord, the nature of the end (Moksha) and
the

obstructions that arise while pursuing the goal. These five topics are
also

addressed in all philosophical texts.

{{The epic Ramayana which is the delineation of the life of the Lord}}

(1)

when He manifested as Rama, in verse, meets these conditions and hence
it is

not considered as just a Kavya but a sacred scriptural text on a par
with

the Vedas. The circumstances under which Valmiki composed the Ramayana
was

divinely ordained.

Narada visited the hermitage of Valmiki and for a question raised by
him as

to who was the most virtuous person who had inimitable traits, the
celestial

sage recounted the life of Rama briefly. Valmiki ruminating on what he
had

heard from Narada went to the river Tamasa along with his disciple
Bharadwaja for performing his daily rituals and the sight of the

killing of

the male of a pair of cranes by a hunter disturbed the sage so much when he saw the female bird's misery, that he spontaneously uttered a curse.

It is said, Valmiki was greatly disturbed after the incident but was surprised that the curse that he had uttered was in the form of a verse. It was the element of pathos that had triggered its composition and certainly a great sage like him would not have cursed the hunter intentionally. That it was ordained by the Divine transpired soon as the creator, Brahma, visited the sage and blessed him and interpreted the verse to be the invocatory verse (Mangala sloka) {{for writing the life of Rama which he had heard from Narada.}} (2)

The manner in which the epic was composed due to the grace of Brahma who blessed that the Ramayana would continue to be recited as long as the Earth existed has a special significance for mankind. Rama is no ordinary hero but the Almighty Himself who assumed the human form to set an example for humanity. The travails that He underwent in this incarnation is a pointer that it is possible for man to remain true to Dharma in worldly life.

The epic has all the basic requirements of a scriptural text and the most important message of the text is its delineation of {{the path of surrender to God as an easy means to liberation which can be adopted by one and all.

The Lord Himself had assured this during the instance of Vibhishana's surrender}} (3). (Monday, February 15, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Ramayan is truly the story of the life of the Lord, or God. It is the experience of the self by a saint -whether Tulsi (some 500 years ago) or

Valmiki (of Sat-yug), obtained through his spiritual master while he is in his own body. Ram means God, and "Ayan" means house, thus Ramayan means the house of God -the human body. When we experience the presence of God in ourselves in our own bodies, we realize the Truth. Saints have written Ramayan only after self realization or God realization, else everybody knows their past. Thus, Ramayan is a well known scriptural book too.

(2) It is said that sage Valmiki wrote the Ramayan before the birth of Rama. When Narada told him the life of Rama, it is obvious that this Rama could not possibly be the son of Dasharath who was not even born then. It is said that Rama -the son of Dasharath was born towards the end of Tretayug, where as Valmiki was in the end of Satyug and beginning of Tretayug. In reality, Narad was Valmiki's spiritual master who told him the story of the Truth, the God, the Rama -"Ramati so Rama", the Ram which dwells everywhere, the omnipresent God; and not of the son of Dasharath.

(3) The path of complete unconditional surrender is the easiest, quickest, and best. But one can not surrender to someone willingly unless one loves some one immensely. A devotee starts with identifying or knowing God, recognizing Him, loving Him which culminates in to service and devotion to God. Even Rama -the son of Dasharath, himself was surrendered to Vashishtha. So much so that the Rama's birth was due to Vashishtha's will. However, one can not surrender until one knows who to surrender -the God. The immense love in God brings automatic surrender. However, it is important to define love here. Kabira said, "Prem Prem Sab Koe Kahe, Prem Na Jaane Koy; Jis Vidh Saain Milan Hoy, Prem Kahaave Soee." Means, "Everybody says love but no body knows what love is; only the way by which God is seen is known as love." Even the common love which most of us

are familiar with is also due to the presence of a fraction of that God in us, hence we love our children, spouse, friends, etc. else we don't, we can't. The goal of human life is to turn that fraction in to whole. Make the body as the seat of the Lord, God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Fri, 12 Feb 1999 12:15:29 -0500

Renunciation, key to true happiness

All created beings are made of the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the combination of which is responsible for the different qualities they exhibit. This is especially relevant to human beings as man can actualize his spiritual potential. Man's personality is conditioned by the gunas which is to a large extent determined by the deeds performed in his previous lives. This predisposition is called Vasana (natural tendency) which gives the distinct individuality to each person.

When Sattva predominates the person is very virtuous and will be gracious towards others to the extent of even sacrificing his interest. Those with a Rajasic disposition are assertive in nature, but well-disposed towards others though they will not go to the extent of forfeiting their interest for the sake of others. The third type of person is utterly selfish and will go to any length to protect his interest.

It is said, the manner in which the queens of Dasaratha reacted to the banishment of Rama to the forest highlights the role of the gunas in shaping the human personality. Kaikeyi was interested only in providing for what she felt was good for her son Bharata and thus she wanted the kingdom to be given to him and was not bothered that her action would cause grief to

others. Whereas, Kausalya had the well-being of both her son Rama and his brothers at heart.

Sumitra personifies the Sattvic type, the most noble of all the three, for she did not mind parting with Lakshmana when he wanted to accompany Rama to the forest. Her advice to him that his duty lay in serving his brother always was the most noblest gesture of all.

This nature in a human being borders on divinity and it further highlights that man can rise to the level of the divine only through renunciation.

As long as there is a trace of selfishness in his actions man cannot realize the joy in sacrificing. The Kamba Ramayanam while describing the episode of Guha meeting the three queens highlights these variations in human nature in the words of Bharata, "Because she gave birth to Rama - a rare and unique achievement - she is in possession of the rarest of wealth. She is a great woman who now stands deprived of all that, owing to my birth.

Introducing Sumitra, Bharata said, "She is a woman who has never departed from the virtuous path and always maintained a life of truth," and pointing to his mother he remarked, "As a result of Rama's departure to the forest, agony is writ large on the face of everyone except her." The Kamba Ramayanam besides its poetic excellence, gives philosophical insight into every episode of the epic. (Friday, February 12, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Renunciation means being free of all three "gunas" and three stages of life "jagrat", "svapna" and "shushupti". Since the entire universe or "prakrati" is made of three gunas, when one goes beyond these, one goes

in
to the domain of "param purush" -pure spirit. This can not be done
until
one has attachments with worldly things including his own body. In a
stage
of trance or "samadhi" or "turiya" one can go beyond three gunas and
three
"avashtas" or stages of life. Since the spirit or God is pure bliss it
is
bound to give true happiness.

People desirous of obtaining true happiness must seek the path of
spirituality -walking on which renunciation is a must and the bliss or
true
happiness is an assured guarantee.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Thu, 11 Feb 1999 12:35:09 -0500

Devotion to God, an end in itself

The human personality endowed with the senses, mind and the intellect,
is
the perfect instrument to realize God unlike other life forms. So human
birth itself is a rare privilege, the significance of which must never
be
lost amidst the day-to-day worldly preoccupations. Sage Suka has, in
the
Srimad Bhagavata, stressed that the senses and the mind must always be
engaged in devotional activities. Many saints have expressed the idea
that
only the time devoted to God is well-spent.

The manner in which secular life can be spiritualised is through
constant
association with holy and pious people ({{Satsangh}}(1)). By doing so,
one
develops detachment slowly from secular matters and devotion takes
root. The
lives of devotees also serve to strengthen devotion as they serve as
examples.

The earliest documentation of the exploits of a great devotee is in the
Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana. Hanuman's heroic deeds and his sterling

devotion to Rama are a source of perennial inspiration. The Ramayana of Valmiki is a pioneering devotional work which kindles devotion in the heart of one who reads or listens to it, as it recounts the glory of the Lord who manifested on this Earth for the sake of humanity.

It was due to Dasaratha's performance of austerities over a long period of time that he became worthy of siring the Lord Himself as his son. This highlights the fact that the Almighty favors those who uphold righteousness and are devoted to Him; but, one must not perform austerities with some ulterior motive or for reward. Devotion to God is an end in itself and is not a means to realize some other objective.

It is said that the birth of Rama brought immense delight not only to Dasaratha, but also to all those who had the great fortune of coming into contact with Him. The epic records the immense joy experienced by those who had a chance to behold Rama. He was a repository of all auspicious qualities which prompted the writing of the epic by Sage Valmiki.

{{Valmiki questioned Sage Narada, "Who can be full of virtues in this world at present? Nay, who is possessed of prowess and knows what is right...?" Narada thus became Valmiki's Guru for it was his grace that enabled the sage to compose the Ramayana in chaste verses}} (2). The tradition of narrating and listening to God's glory was also started by Valmiki for he taught the Ramayana to Rama's sons Lava and Kusa during Sita's stay in his hermitage and they chanted the same before Rama Himself. Thus the Ramayana is not only a poetical work but also a matchless devotional work. (Thursday, February 11, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Satsang is commonly known as singing devotional songs with musical instruments. This gives an attendee a feeling of fellowship, company, and some thing to think about God, but it is not truly a Satsang. This type of gathering and activities are better than indulgence in other vices, such as drinking and dancing in clubs, or reading and seeing obscene novels and literature's, etc. Since such a Satsang is done by singing devotional songs aloud -involving mouth and tongue, hearing musical instruments -involving ears, and sometimes even getting immersed "Jhumna" in the music -involving other organs such as hands, feet, and body; all it does is pleasing our senses. The mind never calms down, instead it registers the reflexes from various senses and gratifies with it. Thus such a Satsang is better than doing nothing or nonsensical things, but the true Satsang -as the word implies, is the company (Sang) of the Truth (Sat), which is beyond the body, mind, wisdom, intellect and ego. Since holy and pious people are constantly in the company of the Truth, their company -whether constant or at times, gives us the inspiration for being in Satsang. We develop love for them, which turns in to devotion and service. Eventually we learn to be in the company of Truth, the Atma or spirit, soul, or God within us and realize the Truth elsewhere. Until we realize the Truth within us we can not see that live force around us, the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God.

(2) When Valmiki asked Narad, "who can be full of virtues in this world at present?" obviously at that present moment there was none else between them two, so it has to be Narad; and the world is far big and large that he never knew the end of it or any nook and corner of it. His world was right there

with Narad. Who else could know what is right between them two? Only Narad (as the other is asking), who became his Guru, only whose grace enabled the sage to write his own experience in Ramayan. Only by Guru's grace one can know God. There is no other way in this universe; and there is only a subtle difference between Guru and God. Just like a student interested in learning English seeks an English teacher, but if he seeks all other i.e., French, Russian, Italian, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, etc. teachers but an English teacher, rest assured he sure does not or can not learn English; hence, wise man desirous of learning spirituality seeks a spiritual master.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Wed, 10 Feb 1999 12:33:55 -0500

Moral order can never be destroyed

{{The Vedas}} (1) are the ultimate authority regarding all matters pertaining to man's conduct in the religion of Sanatana dharma (Hinduism).

The knowledge they impart is of eternal principles that govern the entire creation in which man has to understand his role and discharge his duties.

The moral order which sustains the creation is referred to as "Dharma", though the word has several connotations according to the context in which it is used.

The means of gaining knowledge of Dharma has been broadly classified into

four. The primary source, is, of course, {{the Vedas (Sruti)}} (2). As it is

not possible for all to master them the sages of yore had out of compassion

for humanity compiled the important guidelines into handy manuals.

These texts which go by the general name of Dharmasastras, are called

Smrti (3), because they have been written by the Rishis unlike the Vedas which are revelations. But it is important to note that they are based on the Vedas.

The third source of Dharma recommended by the scriptures themselves is those people who have God realization, know the Truth, or Spirit and are living -usually elders. They are not only adept in the scriptures but also practice them. Any doubt that arises can be clarified from them and in fact it is easier to imbibe practices from elders. One can also adopt such righteous practices which give one satisfaction but this does not mean that one has the freedom to do whatever one likes; one's actions must not violate social norms or hurt others (4).

It is said that no one could destroy Dharma. There may be degeneration in its practice from time to time but there can never be total annihilation because of its universal and eternal nature. Lord Krishna in the Gita has said, "Whenever righteousness is on the decline and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I manifest," and has not indicated that there will be total destruction of Dharma at any time.

The nuances of Dharma cannot be understood by the human intellect. It is for this reason that the scriptures have categorically declared in many instances that the intricacies must be learnt from elders. For all practical purposes it is safer to assume that those practices which are sanctioned by pious elders are best to follow and one must abstain from doing such actions that do not meet with their approval.

Dharma has been classified as general and particular for the purpose of easy

adoption in daily life. Some, like speaking the truth, are applicable to all, whereas, there are specific ones which are applicable only on certain occasions or at a particular stage of life. (Tuesday, February 9, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The real meaning of Vedas is knowledge. To know about the Truth, the God, the self or spirit or soul. Vedas are books too and one can get knowledge from reading those scriptural books but one can not have self realization by that. Literature written by self realized persons becomes scriptures, or Veda, Ramayan or Gita, etc. The knowledge obtained through any or all senses is perishable, and is much different than the eternal knowledge experienced from the spirit or spiritual plane.

(2) Srutis are those documents written by people who heard their contents from a self realized soul, usually a saint or rishi. These reveal the experience of the realized person but do not give the experience to its readers, these only give the bookish knowledge.

(3) Smrtis are those documents written by either the self realized persons themselves or by people who heard it from a self realized person and wrote, at a later date, what ever they could remember. Smritis written by a self realized person are superior to Smritis written by its listener.

(4) This is by far the most important of all. This is also the most popular method. That is why it is taught in school, colleges, ashram, vidyalaya, etc. by live teachers. The important and crucial point in this is that the living saint must be a perfect person having complete God realization else the fake and phony religions, panths, denominations, and individual philosophies emerge which at times do more harm than help to any sincere seeker. Hence one should always seek a living perfect spiritual master. It is the cardinal principle of spirituality that only a

living being could help raise another living being's consciousness; no amount of dead objects (may that be scriptural books) can help the living being raising its consciousness level; the other way, i.e., only a fully realized living being can write down his experience in the form of (any dead objects) books, tapes, video, etc. to encourage interested seekers, is possible

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Mon, 8 Feb 1999 13:02:34 -0500

Piety, an excellent human quality

Noble thoughts and sentiments entertained by any person in his heart and following this trait, carrying out acts which help others and fetch them benefits are bound to be rewarded. Instances are not lacking to show how a person who intends to do only good and who puts this idea into action has been repaid with rich dividends. Good gestures will never turn a waste. For the help so extended, the person will get the return if not forthwith at some time or the other, by the recipient or someone connected with him. Piety in any form is thus an excellent human quality. The Ramayana illustrates this brilliantly.

Pets in particular reciprocate to such acts of affection. At times, even plants, which even ages ago were believed to breathe, reacted in favor of those who tended them. When a dog misses its master for sometime, its joy on seeing him return and fondle it, is only to be experienced. Plants regularly watered and taken due care of but get partially dried on account of temporary absence, will recover quickly the moment those who tend them come back and water them. All living beings possess the trait of "friendship" and

do not fail to demonstrate it.

At the time of departure to the forest during exile, with Her Lord, Sita made a special request to those left behind, to pay proper attention to the cows and birds she was safeguarding in the palace.

Rama was calm even in the face of the worst calamity. Kamban says that He had not only refrained from accusing Kaikeyi but deprecated others blaming her. When Lakshmana rages against her on hearing about Rama's exile for the first time, the God- incarnate calmed him down.

The goal of life is to get liberated from worldly chains and to reach God's kingdom. This could be done only by adhering to the path of virtue very strictly. There is scope to enjoy worldly pleasures and to acquire wealth, both within certain parameters. King Dasaratha gave up prosperity when he decided to relinquish his reins of administration and did not mind forsaking pleasure when he got rid of the clutches of the queen who sought Rama's exile. But on no account did he discard his commitment to Truth and Righteousness. No wonder was he able to go to the Divinity's empire.

In the portrayal of Sita, the poet (Kamban) points out how she was the abode of tenderness of heart, compassion, wisdom, courage and endurance. To Her Rama was everything. The manner in which She convinced Rama that She should go with Him to the forest reflected Her knowledge in various subjects.

(Monday, February 8, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Only in a complete yoga stage, a yogi gets his or her fulfillment from and in the spirit, and spirit only. That is the stage of the equanimity and

calmness. The yogi is then neutral -not affected by pleasures or pains, joys or sorrows. This stage is only reached through piety, which is love, devotion and service. Only people who have reached this stage can initiate it in those who are interested in yoga and spirituality.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Fri, 5 Feb 1999 13:15:23 -0500

Prayers help mitigate one's sufferings

One of the cardinal principles governing man's birth and his activities during his stay in this world, mentioned in all the holy works of Hinduism, relates to his deeds in his past life. Based on the theory of cause and effect or action and reaction, the soul takes a body and enjoys prosperity or is made to face adversity. Thus, this pattern follows the universal law "as a man sows, so does he reap". If in the past, a person had spent his life in accordance with the guidelines prescribed in the scriptural directives, his succeeding birth will be fruitful and he will do good only. The question then arises as to why should a person pray to the Lord as he had already been destined to enjoy or suffer on account of his previous actions. Our sages have not left this doubt unanswered. The Bhagavatham contains the explanation and it could be culled out from the various utterances of the ancient spiritual wisdom. Sage Suka points out that what type of birth one should take next has not been decided yet and the same would be done according to one's acts - positive or negative - in this birth. The spiritual exercises when adopted will make a man adhere to righteous path and so, his next life would be smooth. Also, prayers and other practices are sure to mitigate the intensity of the sufferings he may have to face now.

Bhagavatham refers to a conversation between Lord and His devotee wherein

the latter appealed to the Lord to release him from the cycle of births and deaths. The Lord reminded him of the law of action and reaction and said that as soon as the fruits of his deeds have been enjoyed, he would be ready for the rebirth. The devotee wanted in that case he might be made to be born as a dog and to lay at the entrance of the Lord's temple so that he would have a glimpse of the devotees visiting the Lord, think always of the Golden Feet of God, and get immersed in devotion.

Apart from dealing with the Lord's numerous incarnations, this sacred text details His appearance on earth as Krishna, dealing with His childhood days, His pranks in the houses of the village community and His destruction of demons sent to wipe Him out. In one instance, the Lord clipped the ego entertained by some because of their nearness to Him. This scriptural work is an ocean of devotional ideas. God can be approached through devotion and by developing an attitude of attachment though man will always be pulled by several distractions. {{Clinging to God's Holy Feet will surely make devotees resort only to the path of virtue}} (1). (Friday, Feb. 5, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There is no other way. When one is constantly clinged to God's Holy Feet there remain no time left to fool with other worldly things and all the virtues of God are bound to come in the devotee, if God so wishes. Constant meditation "Dhyan" on the God's Lotus Feet pleases God and the law of cause and effect, actually all other physical laws of nature ceases affect. This becomes the end of the cycle of births and deaths and the devotee becomes

quite independent or free full of bliss and internal happiness.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Devotion to Lord, not a barren ritual

Wed, 3 Feb 1999 12:50:42 –

The richness and diversity of the universe is a fact of experience. But the
reals constituting this universe are not in a chaotic mess. There is
order,
regulation, mutual adjustment and harmony in life. This shows that
there is
no unrestricted freedom for all to act as they please. Hence, {{the
very
principle of dependence}} (1) presupposes {{the existence and presence
of an
"Independent" authority who controls all activities of the mortals}}
(2).

That authority is God or the Supreme Being who should be accepted as
the
creator and sustainer of this vast and stupendous organization. None
can
equal that Supreme. This is the view of Sri Madhwacharya (late 19th
century), expounded in his system of philosophy known as "Dwaita" or
dualism. In one sentence the Acharya conceptualizes Him thus,
{{"Independence is God"}} (3)..

The Acharya was charged with the task of uplifting humanity from
foolish
ways and enabling it to walk erect on the path of devotion and service.
His
creed of devotion was backed by the wise counsel to perform one's
duties.

The simple way in which he countered the arguments of some is amazing.
{{"If
we are masters of our own destiny, and if there is no God, why then are
we
not able to achieve what all we desire nor prevent happenings which we
do
not want to take place?" }} (4). He has given a meaning and substance
to
ethical efforts and spiritual exercises. {{Devotion is not a mere
barren

ritual but embraces service to humanity as a necessary, indispensable part of it}} (5).

On the occasion of Madhwa Navami, the Acharya's teachings is summed up as follows: "God is the real doer and men are only tools (dependent agents) in His hands. Hence, the knower of truth should think that he does nothing by himself. He should dedicate all his doings to God with detachment. Then only he will remain unaffected even as a lotus leaf is not drenched by water." In a hymn, it is stated that {"there is none equal to Madhava (God), none equal to Madhwa as the spiritual mentor, nor to his valid doctrines and none equal to one who has digested his works."}} (6)

During the last century, a sorcerer, not able to defeat the Swami in philosophical debate, used his evil power to cause him a nasty type of illness which prevented him from conducting his daily worship of the Lord.

Praying to God, the Swami cut off the upper portion of a banana tree, causing this to be the exit for the evil power, thereby proving that the body, an instrument of God, can be cleansed of impurities if the thoughts are turned towards God. (Wednesday, February 03, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) People think they are independent, but they forget that they could not have existed without depending on their mothers, who bore them, reared them, nurtured them and made them able to think of independence.

(2) We may not see stars during day but that does not negate their presence out there in the sky. They exist. It is the ignorance of ours, as bright as the sun, that masks the abundant light they have just because they are

far away. The God exists in abundance but due to our ignorance that we consider Him far out there. He is so close to us and being so big until we shed off our ego to nothing and move ourselves in to a different plane that the big object can be seen with our immortal eye. It is impossible to see Him with our mortal eyes by our being so small and He being infinite, hence we have to come out of our physical, material plane and get in to the spiritual plane to enable ourselves to see Him -the immortal, Truth, spirit or self.

(3) So if any human being is dependent on food to eat, water to drink, and air to breath he is not god. But if that human being goes in to meditation, obtain Samadhi or trance -a "Turiya" state of life, where he is not dependent on anything but God -that infinite, would he not be God like?

(4) We only think so, that is, we are masters of our own destiny. We do that because we do not know the Truth. The fact that we even can not sneeze when we want to, or can not pass out waste unless the pressure (cramp) is started, or vice versa, indicates that the real doer -the spirit, is some one else and we are just the vehicle or instrument, which moves only until the wind is exhausted. Who winds it? We! How can we be when even our existence was not there before we were conceived? A friend of mine could not do much when his son fell sick and went in to coma for 8 days or so. He kept asking, why me, why my son only? Is it not something he did want to prevent happening but he could not; Is it not something he wished to get his son well right away but he could not achieve that wish? Many things happen out of nothing for which reasoning fails. There is a reason but we do not know it. We just do not know our past lives or our future, until of course

we are able to know such.

(5) Devotion is nothing else but service to humanity, which only comes after we know a perfect human -call him God. This knowledge comes when we have love in our hearts for living beings, specially humans -not limited to (our) spouses, children, and relatives or people who we know, they are only a part, not the total humanity. But unfortunately, we only say we love them and it is very hard, if not impossible, to love some human who we even do not know.

(6) This is trinity (similar to -the Father, the Son, and Holy ghost) -the God, the spiritual preceptor or mentor, and one who wants to know it -can be you or anyone. Gyey, Gyan, and Gyata. The goal -the God, to be known and achieved, the knowledge from the one who knows Him -the Guru, and the knower who wants to know -the disciple or seeker. When anyone of these three is not there the other two can not be known. This proves that if we -the knower, exist, the other two also exist. Those who have known Him, seen Him, have said so; and that is enough of the evidence that God is there. This fact (that people known Him) makes the very argument about non existence of God mute, futile; the point is how one can accomplish his goal. All the efforts, energies and resources including this body, mind and all the wealth of the world must be utilized to know Him -the God.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Fri, 15 Jan 1999 13:10:15 -0500

Prerequisites of spiritual life

A spiritual aspirant who adopts the path of action (Karma yoga) enunciated in the Bhagavad Gita must constantly remember the scriptural guidelines

while applying it in his daily life because it involves conscious reorientation of all actions to the ultimate goal, which is liberation from rebirths.

{{The material end which results from every action must be subservient to the spiritual goal. This requires a discriminating mind which should be able to understand clearly what is eternal and what is ephemeral in life. Except the spiritual end, all other achievements in life are not lasting. }}
(1)

To enable the seeker to remember the spiritual goal, the mind must be attuned properly without allowing it to be distracted. Otherwise, it will always be preoccupied with material ends. {{The only way to remain true to the goal is through involving God in all actions, the reason being that all other ends have an element of impurity because they are material. By remembering God in all endeavors even routine actions become worship of the Divine. }} (2)

In Bhagavad Gita, it is said that the aspirant must have absolute faith in divine dispensation. Mental preparedness to accept the result of one's action as God's grace (Prasada), especially when it is unfavorable, with equanimity of mind, is important spiritually. If one meets with success then one must not take the credit, but accept that as an act of divine grace.

It is important to remember that human effort is absolutely necessary in every action. As the impediments that arise may be beyond one's control, to thwart them God's grace is essential.

Most of the problems in life are due to the reason that one does not enjoy what one does. This can be seen especially in the case of a person's avocation which he may be doing due to family commitments. This creates

unnecessary tensions and conflicts in life. What is the way out for those who are caught in such a situation? If one does not have a choice to switch over to a job of one's liking, one has to make a conscious effort to enjoy doing it.

{{Contrary to the general notion that one who takes to the spiritual path gets divorced from worldly life, only a person who has oriented his life to the spiritual goal develops a balanced perspective of life.}} (3)

Without being cynical he is an embodiment of optimism and compassion, develops serenity of mind accepting the Truth. (Friday, January 15, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is just like every morning we had to go to work where we spend most of our time. But we just can not wake up, jump out of bed and go to work. We have to go to bath room, brush our teeth, shave, take shower, dress up, pray, eat breakfast, polish our shoes, take our overcoat, umbrella, briefcase, etc. and then go to work. All these works are essential but subservient to the main task of going to work. All these works are for doing the main task, else we can do anything we want, at any time and in any order we wish on holidays when we don't go to work. However, if we spend all our time in any and all of these subservient works we will get late for the work as we won't be able to go to work. Therefore, everything in the life -eating, drinking, seeing, reading, listening devotional music or discourses, working jobs, sleeping, going temples, meeting people, etc. are all for ONE purpose -meeting God, knowing God, Knowing the Truth. And if we do everything, wasting our entire life in doing all the rest subservient things, except knowing God, knowing who are we? what is our real self? then

we have wasted our life. We did not go to work for which we dressed up and did all other pre- actions. This would be just like a student who went to school all his life, read all through the whole night before the examination to sleep in the morning to miss the examination.

(2) This is the easiest way also. Everything we eat or drink we offer to God before we eat or drink; everything we see or hear we see God's beauty in it, purpose in it. Everyone we meet we see God's image in them. Everything we do we see God's work in it. We become the "Drashthaa" spectator and witness every work we do instead of becoming the doer. We consider ourselves as the medium through which God is getting all and any work done through us. We sacrifice or kill ourselves to live the eternal, happiest life one ever lived. Then it is very easy to see or know the Truth, the self, the God.

(3) How can you leave the world? It is impossible to do so. Even after you leave this body the ashes stays in one or other form in this world or universe. And what happens to the spirit, soul? It also stays here but in different form and shape having different name depending upon the time, "Karma", "Savbhaava", "Gunas" as chased by the illusion or "Maayaa" until God mercifully give us the human birth again for no interest of His just to liberate from this cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Therefore, leaving the entire world, means living in the world yet living unattached to it, the wise men pray God.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Thu, 14 Jan 1999 07:55:53 -0500

Service to God, goal of human life

In the hymns composed by saints in praise of God, it is customary to express

their objective right at the outset. This is especially true when they express their desire to perform eternal service to the Lord right in the beginning and discusses it again later when He appeared before them to grant them liberation.

Having reached the inner apartments of Nandagopa's house where Krishna and Radha were seated, in that very early morning hour because it would be impossible to meet Him otherwise. This hour is considered auspicious for spiritual practice as the mind will be free from worldly preoccupations.

{{That Self-surrender is the only way open to them as they are not eligible to adopt other spiritual methods}} (1) is highlighted in some hymns. Just as the rivers flow towards the ocean and the lotus blooms when the sun rises, {{man exists for the sake of the Almighty alone}} (2).

More than the act of service it is the frame of mind of the devotee while performing it which is important. The Lord has drawn attention to this in the Bhagavad Gita wherein it is mentioned that even a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water offered with love and devotion pleases Him.

Saints portray succinctly what one should seek from the Almighty. If service to Him is the ultimate goal after performance of surrender to God, one must pray to Him to remain true to the goal. When their wish was granted they further beseech that the Lord should enable them to remain true to Him without allowing their mind to be swayed by worldly distractions.

(Thursday,
January 14, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) As said in yesterday's Food for thoughts, self surrender is not for people who are not eligible to adopt other spiritual methods. It is said to be much superior to all other methods. It is considered that the unconditional, selfless surrender is due to love and not compulsion; It is a success not a failure. The love, devotion and service involves sacrifice and is like the wife of God where as the selfish service, conditional (failed from there so it is here) surrender is like a maid or a dancer of God. Remember, God can fire the maid, even God's consort (wife) can fire a maid where as the wife can fire a husband, or rather a husband can not fire a wife without her consent and without missing her or without paying a heavy compensation. So devoted surrender is far superior than that of surrendering because you failed from all other recourses, which of course may not fulfill your objective and goal anyway.

(2) The cause or reason of the man's birth as human is to know God, and its (human life's) purpose is also to know God. Then why not know the Truth instead of clinging to the false inanimate world.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Wed, 13 Jan 1999 13:38:02 -0500

Almighty's grace, unconditional

{{Self-surrender (Saranagati) is meant for the spiritual aspirant who is unable to adopt the other prescribed paths to liberation. The aspirant must take refuge in God expressing his inability to adopt the other methods and the feeling of utter lowliness is the sine quo non of surrender. The aspirant must constantly remember his failings and repose absolute faith in God.}}

(1)

The Lord's grace is unconditional and He can grant anything and there is no necessity for the aspirant to express his requirements. In the case of man's redemption from bondage his sins act as the barrier between him and God. The spiritual practices are meant to counteract the sins. When a female saint sought Him as the end the Lord responded by asking what they all had done to merit His grace. She declared that they had not done anything as they were simple folks who had no knowledge of the scriptures.

It is said that the Lord pointed out that their act of going behind the cows by itself was a meritorious deed and He could grant their wish for this act alone. But the saint had no such pretensions about their merit. She says categorically that they tended the cows because it was their occupation.

Even if one does not follow the path of action prescribed in the scriptures one could deserve God's grace through spiritual knowledge. "But this is certainly ruled out in our case," says saint, "because we are ignorant cowherd-maidens." In spite of all these demerits they were greatly blessed because the Lord had chosen to live amidst them of His own accord.

Thus saint underscores the Almighty's compassionate nature which is the overriding factor in the redemption of the soul from bondage. Lest the Lord should decide against granting them liberation because they did not deserve it, the saint cautions that their relationship is eternal and hence He cannot overlook this. As the Lord of all creation He had no choice but to claim them as His own. Unlike other worldly relationships, the relationship between the Lord and His creation cannot be severed. (Wednesday, January 13, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One can not surrender to someone willingly unless they like and love him or her without any expectation or return. It (surrender) is the best option one can choose, not because one is unable to adopt other options. Actually other options may be easier, out of compulsion or selfish interest and they do not yield the company of God, so why should one spend his or her time and effort which does not yield the desired result or goal. To surrender unconditionally is only possible when there is an abundant of love and liking for God and you are ready to sacrifice everything for Him. It is not the inability to adopt the other methods, it is the ability, wisdom and smartness of choosing the best specially when it yields the desired result -God realization. If one remembers his failings and one develops utter lowliness, one would be depressed and will not be able to do anything. There is a difference between self surrendering to God with love and devotion and the slavery of God. The former is like the consort of the God -Bhakti, where as the later is like a maid or dancer -Maya. In Ramayan it is said, "Maayaa Bhagati Sunhu Tumha Dou, Naari Barg Jaanai Sab Kou; Puni Raghubeerhi Bhagati Piaaree, Maayaa Khalu Nartaki Bichaaree." Means, "You listen, both illusion (Maya) and devotion (Bhakti) are feminine, everybody knows that; yet God loves the devotion and the illusion is like a poor wicked dancer (at the command of God)." Thus surrendering as a beloved and surrendering as a slave are two big different things. It is though very hard to love some body selflessly, but once a person who loves God selflessly instigate us we know the hard part easily. God blesses us with the company of such person and the way to God becomes clear.

With best wishes
Sincerely

DS

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Righteousness must be upheld always

Tue, 12 Jan 1999 12:14:23 -0500

The decline in righteousness (Dharma) in this Kali age has been foreseen in the scriptures. There are four Yugas in every cosmic cycle and according to the scriptures the first Yuga is characterized by Dharma and there is gradual decline in it progressively. The Kali Yuga being the last it is un-righteousness which is in preponderance now and Dharma is upheld only by a very small percentage of people. The Almighty incarnates from time to time to re-establish righteousness whenever there is degeneration to the extent that it affects those who adhere to the path of Dharma.

His manifestations as Rama and Krishna in which He assumed the human form are especially important in this regard. When He manifested as Rama He was able to accomplish the purpose of His manifestation much easily than when He incarnated as Krishna because of the nature of the Yuga. Righteousness was predominant in that age and even the lay people were conversant with the nuances of Dharma.

It is said that the episode of Rama befriending Sugriva and promising him to vanquish his brother Bali, threw light on the nuances of Dharma. Though by birth Sugriva was a monkey the Lord befriended him which highlights His accessibility to one and all. Sympathizing with his plight very easily, for Rama was also in the same frame of mind because of separation from Sita, He promised to restore his kingdom and wife to him.

When Sugriva challenged Bali to a fight at Rama's behest, Tara cautioned her husband that it was his new-found friend Rama who had vowed to kill

him.
Kamba Ramayanam dilates on Bali's sense of propriety and moral
uprightness
in this episode. Greatly pained on hearing Tara's aspersion about
Rama's
intention Bali countered, "What a sinner you are. It was this world,
unable
to put an end to the evils here, that had invited Rama to remove them.
You
have uttered words that are a blasphemy to Rama who has shown the path
of
Dharma by his very actions... What will He gain by killing me?"

It was his abiding faith in Rama that he would not compromise on
righteousness that emboldened Bali to question the propriety of Rama's
action when he learnt that His arrow had fatally wounded him. Pointing
out
that {{His father had given up his life for the sake of truth and honor
of
his race}} (1) he asked Him, {{"Do you think that a wrongful deed done
by
you can escape condemnation simply because you prevent others from
doing
wrongful deeds?}} (2) You are supposed to be... the custodian of
Dharma."
Rama pointed out the un-righteous acts that Bali had committed.

(Tuesday,
Jan. 12, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Dasharath gave up his life while upholding his words. Dharam
dictates
that we always speak Truth, even if we have to die for it, as said in
Ramayan, "Raghupati Riti Sadaa Chali Aaee, Praana Jaaee Par Vachan Na
Jaaee." Means, "This is the tradition of noble people that they always
speaks truth, they do what they say even if they had to die to keep
thier
words."

(2) No wrongful deeds done can escape punishment except in case God
pardons
it. The law of Karma requires that every action has a befitting
result.

Only saints or God can override this law. Even if we prevent others from doing wrongful deeds but ourselves keep doing wrongful acts, we will have to bear its result. We shall reap so shall we sow, although mercy can only come from the merciful God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Sat, 9 Jan 1999 13:46:27 -0500

All events take place as per God's will

Religious history of India {{establishes the significance of various rites and rituals performed as part of the spiritual exercises to gain Divine grace}} (1). Some may entertain the view that {{these ceremonies - minor in nature or major - requiring greater personal sacrifice are of no relevance now}}(2).

The prayers that are offered will reach the Supreme Being but {{minor deities and God's other creations who are also vested with some powers, should also be revered}} (3). The Mantras uttered on such occasions will enable devotees to get their blessings too.

{{That even God, when assuming the human form as an ordinary citizen, strictly observed the religious rites has been clearly explained to us in the Ramayana}} (4).

The Divine drama reveals as to how events take place only according to God's plan. Otherwise, a woman, who had held the hero as her son, could not have changed her decision within a brief time. Elaborate arrangements had been made for Rama's coronation but the entire scene underwent total transformation resulting in Rama's banishment.

The God- incarnate was half-way through the religious procedures when He was summoned. Even on His return after being informed about Kaikeyi's demands, He was cool and completed the rites, circumambulating the vessels containing water made holy by the recitation of Mantras. Rama's face resembled the lotus found in a picture, both when he was asked to ascend the throne and when he was banished to the forest.

Because of this most unexpected attitude of Kaikeyi, posterity speaks ill of her. On the other hand, it was part of the Divine plan. She was

assigned this role. But for her, the scenes in Ramayana would not have proceeded further and the Lord could not have achieved His purposes of incarnation - to punish the evil and protect the pious. "Will any one like his or her fame to be tarnished? No one will invite such a predicament", particularly pinpointing Kaikeyi's sacrifice, though she had incurred the displeasure of so many.

Guhan, the hunter chieftain, could guess about this "Truth" when Bharata met him. Mysterious are God's deeds. The Lord had not expressed any opinion about Kaikeyi's demand. Rama passed through the courtyard where vessels containing sanctified water were kept as part of the coronation rites, very slowly. He set an example that rules in the scriptures should be observed strictly, by all, whatever the position they occupy. (Saturday, January 9, 1999)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Spiritual exercises are done in our own body, mind, intellect, chit, and ego, and no external rites and rituals are performed to gain divine grace. If we study chemistry how can we learn geography, similarly if we perform Yagnas or rituals and rites we will only get the results of performing those Yagnas or rituals and rites; but if we love God we will get to know God.

(2) The spirit is ONE, and it is all ONE, just like the waters of the ocean and all other waters of the rivers, rain, ponds, etc. There is no minor and major spirit, just like there is no minor and major water, it's all H₂O, or same element. Jeev (lives) are all different but where is the minor or major spirits? It is just like: the cotton is same in all clothes, whereas the clothes may be of different texture, design, sizes, etc. There are no ceremonies involved in spiritual realization. All ceremonies are developed by rituals, customs, rites, etc. which varies from place to place and time to time. These are all false because these are all mortals, ceremonies varies, are distorted, become extinct, and new rituals grows, where as the spirit is immortal, infinite, and ever pervading.

(3) Everything has power -more or less. Even an ant, or a leaf of a plant, or a grain of sand has some energy in it, why would these deities not have power? They do. If we revere them it's okay, we get some power from them or their blessings, but our main focus should always be to know God -the source of all power. Know the seed which has the whole tree in it. Know God from which everything in the world, rather universes including deities, get power.

(4) Ramayan is a great thing. When we can see Raam in this Ramayan we know the meaning of Ramayan; what is it really telling us? How and why different characters are acting so in Ramayan -a drama? Raam -ONE dwelling everywhere, is God; where as when IT personified in human form as Ram Chandra -the son of Dasharath, is also God, but that God was there in "Treta Yuga". The formless God manifested for performing particular works for the sake of His devotees for a limited time during his life span. He was like an ordinary person yet full of all virtues without any of the vices, thus an extraordinary ONE. It is very hard to know that formless God (although it is very easy to worship), therefore is the need to know the God with a form which is also hard to worship but only way it is possible to do so with our mortal bodies. One should therefore seek the knower of the knowledge of God to know Him. He will tell you the "Gyan" with which you the "Gyata" will be able to know the "Gey" -the God. If any one of these three items is missing it would not be possible to know God. With best wishes.

Sincerely
DS

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God keen to reform erring individuals

Fri, 8 Jan 1999 12:22:42 -0500

An embodiment of true devotion

Thu, 7 Jan 1999 12:17:49 -0500

Devotion is of three types - motivated, unmotivated and the ultimate. In the third kind the devotee sees the Lord as Immanent. There had been innumerable devotees who had done yeoman service not only to the Lord but also to Lord's messengers and His ardent devotees. But an exceptional example of the third category who dedicated everything - his body and soul to the Lord was Anjaneya. He realized that Rama was an incarnation of the Supreme Being and {{served Him with pure love and devotion without expecting anything in return}} (1). He was humble, brave and wise and possessed all the virtues expected of a true devotee.

He has been hailed in the invocatory verse of one of the version of the Ramayana as one who protected the lives of those dearer to Rama. He

crossed
the ocean by uttering Rama's name, saved Sita in the nick of time,
brought
the hill with herbs in it to restore Lakshmana back to life and
prevented
Bharata, who had decided to fall into the flames, from doing so. But he
never boasted of his bravery or intelligence. That is why he has been
hailed
as one who is rich in chosen vocabulary. Anjaneya is the hero of the
Sundara
Kanda (a chapter) of the Ramayana. But his introduction in the
Kishkinda
Kanda (another chapter of Ramayana) when he comes to find out at the
first
sight of Rama and Lakshmana as one whose heart melts with devotion,
clearly
explains the shape of things to come. His kind words, disguising
himself as
an ascetic, modest bearings and quick replies in chaste language
impress the
Lord greatly.

Rama calls Anjaneya as one who is rich in chosen vocabulary and these
words
have an inner meaning. From the moment Anjaneya considered Rama to be
an
incarnation of the Supreme Being, he showed unstinted devotion and
lived for
Him and Him alone. He had no other interest in the world except serving
Rama. He was the true possessor of the wealth of Rama Nama and hence
has
been hailed by many poets thus. Anjaneya also had three other
specialties.
Rama never took Viswarupa as Krishna did thrice. But Anjaneya took this
form
before crossing the ocean. While the Lord granted salvation to all
animate
things who lived in Ayodhya, Anjaneya was not willing to leave this
world
where Rama lived. Moreover he did not want to shed the body which was
embraced by Him. The Lord who could not go as messenger when he
incarnated
as Rama, had this desire fulfilled during Krishna Avatara when He,
following
the example of Anjaneya, went as Pandava's emissary to Duryodhana's
court.

(Thursday, Jan. 07, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The best and greatest type of devotion is one which is done selflessly with immense love and service to the Lord. This devotee sees his God in every living beings but the best in human beings. This devotee does not see anything other than his God. Once Tulsidasji was asked to compare his God's face with other things in the world, he thought of the powerful sun, the cool moon, and all other magnificent things of the world. He did not find anything in this universe which would come close to his Lord's face, therefore, finally he said there is none else like God's face or God. This is the power of the personified God and the personal intense devotion. Actually the devotee merge in to God and the devotee, the God and the spirit all becomes one. Gyaata, Gyaan, and Geya; Dhayaataa, Dhyaan, and Dheya all becomes ONE. That is the supreme form of devotion. There are many other types of devotion -the most commonly known as "Navadha Bhakti" (the nine types of devotion). "Starting with the Company of saints; Always talking about God; Service to lotus feet of Guru; Praise the Lord; Chanting God's Word or Naam with steadfast belief; Calmness and equanimity; Seeing God in everyone and considering saints more than God; Being content and never seeing others faults; and Believing in me", so said Rama to Shabari, in Tuls'i's Ramayan.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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'Guru' who stood for national unity

Tue, 5 Jan 1999 15:52:16 -0500

"The same God is in the temple as well as in the mosque. A Hindu worships Him while a Muslim prays to Him. Humans are all one though of diverse forms. Gods, demons and the divine minstrels, Hindus and Muslims are alike. They imbibe the influence of the environs they inhabit. They possess similar eyes, ears and body which are made of earth, air, fire and water. They adore the holy Puranas and the Quran and all are of the same form and one in their making". These were the noble sentiments of a saint who had a large heart and broad ideas on religious beliefs. He respected all religions and their modes of worship. Accused of having made some derogatory remarks about the founder of Islam, he had cited the above- mentioned poem in praise of God who had forgiven people even for very severe and unworthy acts. This saint was Guru Gobind Singh, who during a short span of life, did wonders.

In the galaxy of spiritual heroes, this tenth Guru of the Sikhs occupies a distinguished place. The then social and political condition turned him into a soldier and also as a political figure.

The message of the founder of Sikhism (Guru Nanak) has been summed up by himself as "work, worship and share your food with others". On these footprints walked the last of the 10 Gurus. The torch lighted by Guru Nanak was kept shining by all his successors through their hard labor and toil till the death of Guru Gobind Singh who declared before his departure for his heavenly abode that henceforth, {"the holy Granth" (a scriptural book like Bible, Quran, and Gita) would be the spiritual Guru}} (1) of the Sikhs and that people would be guided by the teachings in the sacred book.

It is said, even while very young, the 'Guru' revealed the spark of divinity within him. He had learnt Gurumukhi and could recite hymns from the "Granth Sahib", acquired proficiency in Sanskrit and Persian, received training in horsemanship and in the use of weapons as his father knew it well that a time would come soon when Gobind would have to resort to the sword to fight tyranny. When he became the `Guru' after his father's martyrdom, he awakened his countrymen, transformed them into an aspiring race, molding the Sikh nation into a religious and military commonwealth so as to fight the tyranny of the then rulers. He stood for secularism, democratic principles and man's rights and non-interference in one's personal life. Throughout his career (of 42 years) he fought for human freedom, not for individual gains. He aimed at bringing national unity and emotional integration of Indian people.

(Wednesday Jan. 6, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) "The holy Granth" has many great writings like there in Ramayan, Gita, Quran, Bible, Bodh Granth, etc. and we can obtain knowledge from these scriptural writings to increase our inquisitiveness to know the Truth, our eagerness and yearning to know God. However, it appears logical that only a divine soul like Guru Nanak, Kabira, Guru Govind etc. can initiate and instigate an individual soul for its realization of the ultimate reality, the Truth, the God, the Spirit. Hence is the need of a living spiritual master, which even Guru Govind also had while he was here on this earth.

With best wishes
Sincerely

DS

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Surrender to God must be absolute

Mon, 4 Jan 1999 12:41:56 -0500

{{According to Hinduism the Supreme Being is Sriman Narayana and hence the Lord is always worshipped along with His consort, the Divine Mother. In the redemption of the souls from bondage, the role of Sri is very significant for She mediates on behalf of the soul. So, in the performance of surrender it is to the Divine Mother that one must submit first. She accompanies the Lord when He manifests in the world.}}

(1)
Nandagopa, Yashoda, Balarama and Nappinai are addressed first before approaching Krishna. Nappinai is considered as the incarnation of Nila Devi. It also points out the characteristics of a devotee. The inheritance of the spiritual legacy by a devotee is also only due to the devotee's objective of the performance to attain Lord Krishna.

In the Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, ``Four types of devotees of noble deeds worship Me, the seeker after worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker of knowledge and the man of wisdom... Of these the best is the man of wisdom, ever established in identity with Me and possessed of exclusive devotion. For I am extremely dear to the wise man and he is extremely dear to Me." In Vedanta Desika it is interpreted by pointing out that to {{the true devotee (wise one)}} (2) the Lord is all - the water he drinks, the food he eats and the clothes he wears.

It is said that the Almighty responded only when a devotee surrendered to Him totally. The manner in which He saved Draupadi's modesty when she was disrobed in the assembly where her valiant husbands and elders like Bhishma

stood helplessly is a case in point. The Lord interceded without appearing personally only after she abandoned all efforts and sought His intercession.

So also, was the case of the elephant-king Gajendra. The elephant struggled with the crocodile for thousand(s) of years according to the Puranic account and it was only when it was in the throes of death did it cry out to the Lord when He rushed to its rescue.

There have been interesting insights given by the preceptors as to why the Lord did not appear in person when Draupadi surrendered to Him, whereas He did so in the case of the elephant. Had Krishna come there in person He would have killed all the Pandavas first, as the moment she surrendered to the Lord in distress all others including her husbands ceased to have any hold on her. (Monday, Jan. 4, '99)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The "Maya" (the illusion) -the Lord's maid, and "Bhakti" (the devotion) -the Lord's consort or spouse both appear with the Lord. Both are female in nature, hence men (the "jeevs") are always attracted towards them. However, those who are attracted to devotion never keep any illusion with them and see God. Hence, if any one wants the God, try to get devotion first, the illusion will automatically be gone and the Lord God will follow suite, because the God and His power "Shri", or "Shakti" are one inseparable. To know spirit or God, there is no parallel to devotion.

(2) Truly, a wise man is one who is devoted to God. Once we know our own

spirit or soul, and the same spirit dwells everywhere else also, we can know any desired knowledge. Hence, such a person is a wise man. There is nothing wiser than having Love, devotion and service to God. Would you want to know a few pieces of knowledge or rather will have the source of all knowledge -the God?

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Scriptures lay stress on duty, discipline

Fri, 25 Dec 1998 21:54:29 -0500

The entire gamut of scriptural texts lay stress on two important aspects of human conduct, viz. duty and discipline. What constitutes duty and how to cultivate discipline have been clearly spelt out by God Himself in the texts which have brought out His glory, in the form of commands which ought to be obeyed and as guidelines, following which men can brave all hazards.

"{{Perform your prescribed duties, which is better than not working}} (1). But work should be done as a sacrifice to Lord Vishnu, and for His satisfaction; otherwise it binds a person to this material world," says the Lord Himself. Any action carried out with the motive of gain is indeed evil. "You have every right to perform the duties incumbent on you by the socio-religious injunctions of the scriptures but you have no right over the fruits thereof." The wise, engaged in devotional service, take refuge in the Lord and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death by renouncing the fruits of actions in the material world. They attain the state beyond all miseries.

In the several instructions which God in His incarnation as Krishna has given, through His Bhagavad Gita, there is mention of His impartiality. As the Kurukshetra war was due to commence, the rival groups approached Him for support and He offered His army to both. One gladly chose to receive His armed might whereas the other was happy to retain Him as the guide. Those who worship Him with an affectionate heart will be endowed with unmixed love born of pure intelligence and hence will be enabled to attain His blissful realm. The Lord also makes it plain that He will accept any offering made with sincerity and devotion. The Kuchela episode proves this.

It is said that God's wish is that a devotee should translate into action what he decides to do. He did so in His own incarnation. He wanted to establish moral order by eliminating the wicked forces and

He did not fail in this as seen by the blows He gave to Kansa, Jarasanda and a host of others. He protected the virtuous and those who took refuge in Him.

By nature's design the complete system of material activities perplexes everyone. All Vedic literature advise us to approach a bonafide spiritual master who can give the proper guidance for executing the purpose of life. Krishna was such a master who had removed several misunderstandings among ordinary people. If a devotee adopts God's instructions given in the Gita, he can be freed of all fears and sufferings in this life. (Saturday, Dec. 26, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One must know what is one's duty. Our first and foremost duty is towards ourselves. That is to know who are we, and what is our true nature? Are we the dead body or immortal soul, the spirit? In order to know this, we just can not remain doing nothing. Actually, it is impossible to remain without doing something materially or physically. Because, if we cease doing all action then even breathing is also a physical action, we all know that we can not stop breathing. However, we also know that as long as we keep clinging on to the material physical thing we can not know the spirit because the spirit is not material physical thing. Therefore, with the help of physical material thing, such as our body or breathing, we accomplish the stage of practically leaving physical body or breathing by being immersed in another living physical body, thus we can come back to the material physical breathing or body when He wishes. That will be the stage of God realization, spiritual knowledge and fulfillment of our duty. All this is done only for one purpose that having helped myself my entire life becomes dedicated to the service and welfare of people. That is the service before self, but if I do not help myself there is no way I will be in position to help anybody else. This is doing an action but not taking its result for us but giving its results to others so the action done was also for others not for your own selfish gain.

"Parmaartha" delivers you and "Swaartha" binds you; the former afloat you and the later sinks you down in this ocean of human attachments "Bhav-saagar".

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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A gift given by God

Thu, 24 Dec 1998 20:13:54 -0500

{{A gift given by God}} (1)

The festival of Christmas is celebrated with much gaiety. People exchange gifts and greetings. But no gift can be compared to the God-given one to mankind on Christmas Day.

A story is told of a childless rich couple who lived in luxury. As they grew old they realized the need for a child to inherit their possessions. On a Christmas morning, they were going to church. As they walked, the lady stumbled. She sat on the pavement for a while. She heard the cry of a baby in the trash-bin. To her amazement she found a beautiful boy in it, left to die. She nursed the baby and it clung to her. She was disappointed at having to miss the Christmas service in the church, but found joy, in the gift of a baby that God had sent to her on that day. The couple christened the child "Immanuel" which means "God with us".

The Bible speaks of the shepherds who heard the song of the angels about the imminent birth of Christ in the stable of an inn in Bethlehem. They ran to see this wonder of God becoming man and realized that he was a gift to mankind - a gift offered by God to the rich and the poor; to the wise kings and the illiterates; to the black and the white.

The gift brought God's love to man. Sin separates man from God because God is holy. Jesus reflected God's image of holiness and the image of a sinful man. He paid a price to change this sinful image of man to that of God's. The price He offered was His sinless blood through which man gets God's image.

A famous singer in the West lived a licentious life, contracted disease and lost his health and peace. He was driven to the extent of cutting his own finger and offering his blood as a sacrifice to gain peace. The pain only added to the fury. At that time, he heard of the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and believed in the happening. His hope earned him both the joy of Salvation and Peace of God, free of any human sacrifice.

When the Divine Child grew, He said to the people: "I am the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep". He laid down His life on the Cross for the redemption of mankind. Even the condemned criminal who was crucified with Him on the Cross found Salvation when Christ told him "Today, you shall be with Me in paradise".

The Christmas gift is for eternity. Through the ages, this has been accepted, treasured and cherished. Why? In Him is our life because He

voluntarily came to the world; willingly offered Himself on the Cross; and visibly rose up from the grave so as to leave for us a great hope of our everlasting life in glory. (Friday, Dec. 25, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) A gift given by God at once upon a time, in real human form -a savior, Jesus Christ, supposedly on this day. Now a gift -the same human form, is given by God to each one of us. If we don't use it like He demonstrated to the then world, we'll not be using this gift wisely to satisfy its purpose. Being human and not knowing our own spirit, the soul, the God would keep the goal unfulfilled, mission unaccomplished; who knows when if we get this gift again here after this life?

(2) In Him -the spirit or soul, is our life. Without It or Him we'll be dead. He willingly offered Himself on the cross so that we can learn the same willingness to separate the soul from the body, as is done in deep trance or "Samadhi". He -the soul, visibly rose up from the grave so that we can hope of our everlasting life. Our body is the grave for our soul just like a grave is for the dead body. Our body is the house of our God just like our abode is the house for our body. We can free this soul by meditation, trance, or Samadhi while we have this life, then only It will rise up from this grave. The spirit, the God is then realized and we learn spirituality.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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The means to secure divine grace

Wed, 23 Dec 1998 18:16:23 -0500

{{The means to secure divine grace}} (1)

"Grace" is a term that is extremely familiar in religious parlance. It signifies that all human efforts should be approved by the divine and have His stamp. Otherwise, plans formulated by a person with all care may fail. How to secure this grace of the Almighty? The answer has been provided in our scriptures. The simple recipe is that a person should acquire spiritual knowledge so as to realize that God possesses unlimited powers and uphold dharma even in the wake of obstacles. There may be circumstances when a man may try to circumvent dharma but when he stands firm and obeys the Divine directives, he will surely

emerge successful. God will be pleased with his conduct and extend His "Grace" to him.

How a devotee, in spite of personal sacrifice, had stuck to the law of virtue and earned God's blessings is contained in a holy book. A father of six girls had decided to give the eldest in marriage to a boy related to him but changed his mind later and chose another man. He did the same with other five daughters, leaving his relative disappointed. However, the last daughter, seeing her father's failure to keep his word and to compensate this lapse, decided to marry him. The couple left the house and during the night stayed in an inn, in separate chambers. But the boy died of snake bite. The girl, in tears, appealed to God asking him how He could let down devotees who had faith in the Divine Law. A saint happened to pass by, saw her plight and sincerity, prayed to God and brought the boy back to life. Virtue triumphed.

Scriptures prescribe four stages of progress in man's spiritual pursuits. Such an aspirant's all-consuming passion should be to realize God and the eternal truth. His efforts should be backed by earnestness and transparent sincerity. The first requirement is to lead a life governed by righteousness. Second, his conduct should be exemplary. Third, he should equip himself with spiritual knowledge and know that how his link with God can be established firmly. The final stage is to seek the grace of the Divine to enjoy Bliss. His fundamental duty is to keep the mind pure and lead a spotless life. The knowledge that he gains will enable him to understand the significance of the various religious procedures he adopts. For instance, folding the palms as a mark of obeisance while standing before God's representatives and elders indicates that the five senses and the equal number of sensory organs are being kept under control. (Thursday, Dec. 24, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There are many means to obtain God's grace but this is certain that if a spiritual aspirant loves God immensely and always long for his service, His grace is abound. Once a spiritual aspirant establishes connections with the God, the spirit, the spiritual knowledge comes by itself. He can not do any non-righteous conduct which is non-exemplary. At times, if he show any anger, it is not deep inside and he has no grudge or revenge. Thus he forgets and forgives the person treating him bad. That is the saintly quality. God's grace is showered only on devotees who are constantly yearning

for Him and who miss Him constantly.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Chanting mantras requires discipline

Tue, 22 Dec 1998 19:24:15 -0500

{{Chanting mantras requires discipline}} (1)

{{Mantras}} (2), which are invocations of the Supreme Being, have always existed in a latent state as sound energies. They were revealed to the ancient masters and have been codified in the scriptures and handed down from spiritual master to disciple.

There are many rules and regulations and restrictions in regard to their pronunciation adhering to which requires patience and perseverance. They must be repeated in a proper way with great attention to syllables and rhythm. Each mantra has a presiding deity who must be invoked first.

Mantras must be constantly repeated over a long period of time for them to bear fruit. The redeeming power of these Divine incantations is so great that the Vedas have said that those who want to gain realization of the Truth should repeat with absolute and steadfast faith at least once the name of Lord Vishnu.

This Vedic insight has led to the proliferation of hymns in praise of the Lord, both in Sanskrit and other languages. Some saints and apostles have composed, based on the Vedas, a number of poems to bring out their contents so as to be understood by all people. The 4,000 poems in praise of the Lord have been hailed as the analysis of the entire scriptural texts.

It is said that it is possible to drive away the messengers of the God of Death by reciting the holy names of the Supreme Being, thereby pointing out that one's sins can be got rid of by realizing the mistakes one had committed and seeking forgiveness. "Every sinner has got a future and every saint has a past."

That the Lord feels sorry if people stray from the royal path made available for them is evident from the manner in which Ramanuja's cousin had chosen a different system of philosophy. (Wednesday, Dec. 23, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Chanting mantra ensues a disciplined life. In the beginning, we have an unsystematic, unorganized, undisciplined, unhappy life wandering in all direction, but chanting mantra enhances concentration and makes it a disciplined, happy life, which ultimately turns in to Love, devotion and service to God and finally culminate in His vision and union.

(2) There are many mantras, but none of them provide God realization, until we receive a Word of God or Name, call it a mantra, which takes us there, as said, "Mantra Tantra Sab Jhuth Hain, Mat Koe Bharmo Sansaar; Saar Shabda Jaane Binaa, Koe Na Utaare Paar." Means, "All the mantras and magic's are useless, O' World, don't you get confused; without knowing the real Word of God, no body can help realize God." That is the Guru Mantra, also known as "Aghora mantra" known only from one who knows it and can convey it at the spiritual level.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Ways to receive Lord's blessings

Mon, 21 Dec 1998 18:31:08 -0500'

{{Ways to receive Lord's blessings}} (1)

The permanent bond that exists between the Supreme Lord and the human beings and the obstacles which prevent the latter during their stay in the world from reaching the former have been brilliantly portrayed in many verses in a simple hymn. The Vedas and other sources of knowledge which describe the methods to realize God are not so easy to understand. But to enable the message to reach everyone, this hymn is easily digested. As a manifestation of the Divine Mother, the poem's composer, re-enacts the scenes which are described in the Bhagavatham wherein God as Lord Krishna demonstrates His compassion to souls yearning to be with Him forever. Broadly, the theme relates to the vow

and connected austerities to approach God.

In a lighter vein, a devotee has pointed out how in His Bhagavad Gita, Krishna has spoken more about His own virtues amounting to self-praise, has described the limitations of others, has elaborated the merits of the various paths leading to salvation and only in His final words has spelt out the efficacy of "Surrender."

But some saints enunciate this doctrine with clarity. One of the subjects dealt therein refers not only about the anxiety of an aspirant to seek Divine grace but that of the Lord too who is equally keen to take him into His fold and is deeply concerned about his suffering. For instance, in the Ramayana, Bharatha's anguish at Rama's banishment, his austere habits (though as the ruler of a vast kingdom, he could enjoy all comforts) and how he used to have his bath at a very early hour, moved Rama.

The saint explains the procedures to be adopted to earn the Lord's blessings. In the opening verse the philosophy of Visishtadwaita is spelt out. All the valuable guidelines found in the ``Sundara Kand" of the Ramayana (dealing with the admirable qualities of the doctrine messenger Anjaneya) are found in these verses. The poem also mentions about the various stages of the Lord's descent while conferring His blessings. Another description relates to the various sinews of war the Lord retains with Him.

The principal role played by the Acharyas in guiding their disciples on the path of virtue and the steps to be adopted to engage themselves in the Lord's service while living in this world are glorified.

(Tuesday, December 22, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There may be many ways to receive Lord's blessing but there is only ONE way to receive Lord. That is by love and only LOVE. Then we be devoted to serve Him and His people. Unfortunately, many people do not long for the God, they want everything from God and hence His blessing for all those. Until people are interested in material comforts and things it is hard to visualize and experience spirituality. These are just like day and night. Until day breaks the night is not over, or until night's darkness is not gone the day light does not dawn. However, there is no need to deliberately leave any material comforts and materialism, the prime need is to pick up spirituality. Once we are merged in spirituality there won't be any time and attraction to fool with material comforts and materialism.

The rule is: "Every powerful, superior entity automatically replaces the less powerful, inferior entity", may that be pleasure, knowledge, life, or anything. Hence, when we pick up bliss, the lower happiness is not missed (it is included) automatically; when we pick God all His creation is automatically for you even if you do not want it.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Efficacy of the Divine name

Sun, 20 Dec 1998 16:27:15 -0500

Efficacy of the {{Divine name}} (1)

The analogy of gold and ornaments made of gold is handled by the Acharyas to convey this idea. The Lord is like pure gold and His name is like ornaments made from it. Even if one owns a lot of gold it can be used only when made into ornaments. So also, is the case with the Almighty. Though He is the only refuge, the Lord's transcendental nature is such that it is beyond the reach of His devotees and hence it is His name which come to their succor in worldly life. The manner in which the Divine name came to Draupadi's rescue when she called out His name Govinda is an oft-quoted instance to prove its efficacy.

(Monday, December 21, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear friend:

(1) The Lord's Name is also known as "Naam" in Hindi, "Tatva" in Sanskrit, "Shabda" in Urdu, and "Word" in English. It is said in the Bible (John 1.1), "IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Bal-kand of Ramayan, actually the whole Ramayan, is full of the glory of the "Naam". Tulsi said the God's Name is more or higher than the God. It is the Name which has kept the formless God or "Nirgun" and the God with form "Sagun" together. It is said, "Agun Sagun Dui Brahma Saroopaa, Akath Agaadh Anaadi Anoopaa; More Mat Bad Naam Duhoo Ten, Kiye Jehin Jug Nij Bas Nij Booten." Means, "The formless God and God with the form are both same God like "Brahma" (or Truth), speechless, depthless, timeless, and formless; In my opinion the Name is higher than both these Gods (formless and with form), which has kept the both in its control due to its own strength for ages." It is further explained that it is the Name which kept these two together,

such like the body and soul in a live person. Tulsi further clarifies that it is the Name which is like a translator or interpreter by which these two can communicate, as said in Ramayan, "Agun Sagun Bich Naam Susaakhee, Ubhay Prabodhak Chatur Dubhaashee." Means, "The Name is the skilled witness between formless God and God with the form, it is like a smart translator (or a person speaking two languages) who makes both of them understand each other without any fear (or full of trust). Thus the divine Name is sufficient to know the God with a form, such as Guru (or Rama, Krishna, Kabira, Vashishtha, etc. when they were there) and the formless God -the omnipresent. Omnipotent, omniscient God, the spirit. The later can only be known through the former. However, it is with great blessing and grace of God that we meet the former. The main point in this is the person's interest and zeal to know God or spirit and the main character is also he himself to develop that interest.

With best wishes
Sincerely
Ds

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Act with sense of responsibility

Sat, 19 Dec 1998 11:25:20 -0500

Parental role in molding the character and outlook of children has become very important in this age especially as there are several distracting influences outside the home over which {{one does not have control}} (1). Whatever values a child learns from a horde of books can all be negated by a single instance of parental misdemeanor, as values cannot be taught and are imbibed spontaneously from elders. Parents are the role models for their children, so also teachers and elders. A parent or teacher can teach the child more by action than words.

Every individual by virtue of his station in life has certain responsibilities, more so, if he occupies an important position. {{So one has to act with responsibility and with sense of duty, not for the sake of oneself, but out of consideration for others}} (2). This point is driven home tellingly by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, "For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same."

The Lord Himself sets an example for humanity in this matter. Since {{He has nothing to achieve as He is the eternally fulfilled}} (3), if He refrains from action one can imagine the chaos that would ensue. Lord Krishna points out, "Should I not engage in action, scrupulously

at any time, great harm will come to the world, for, Arjuna, men follow My way in all matters."

The duties which every individual has to discharge has been codified in the scriptures to ensure harmony in the world. This necessitates diverse occupations, but this does not mean that one is inferior or superior to the other.

The classification of duties in the scriptures was based on the natural propensity of an individual, as this brought out the best in him. This also ensures that all societal needs are taken care of. The ancient system of Varnashrama dharma is scientific and has a two fold objective -smooth functioning of the society and harmonious development of the individual.

The example of choice of profession helps to appreciate this better. If an individual chooses an avocation suited to his talent he will excel in it as he will be able to execute it effortlessly. He has a natural advantage and derives satisfaction in his job and what he earns is only incidental. Whereas, if he takes to a career because it is lucrative, his life will be miserable and perhaps be a failure also as he is never happy with his lot. When one takes up a career in which one has aptitude one does not feel the burden of working hard. (Saturday, December 19, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One does not have any control over other's actions or over things happening in the nature, but one does have some what, rather full, control over his own self. We can change ourselves much easier than we try to change the outside world influences. This is the beginning of the spiritual studies, knowing our own selves than knowing outside world.

(2) Actions done for the sake of oneself are called selfish actions, where as actions done out of consideration for others benefits and advantages are "Paramaatha" or the supreme acts.

(3) This is the state of Paramsant. A man who wants nothing is indeed the richest man -a contented man. It is said, "Go Dhan Gaj Dhan Baajee Dhan, Aur Ratan Dhan Khaan; Jab Aave Santosh Dhan, Sab Dhan Dhuree Samaan." Means, "One can have all the wealth of cows, elephants, cash or property and the mines of all precious stones; but when the wealth of contentment is achieved all other wealth's are like dirt (valueless). When a spiritually enlightened person is eternally

happy and fulfilled He has nothing more to know or gain or to achieve,
yet He keeps doing all righteous acts just to set examples for others
benefits and welfare. That is where the peace of "jeev" or life lies.
With best wishes
Sincerely, DS ++++++

Uphold truth as the greatest penance

Fri, 18 Dec 1998 12:08:55 -0500

The spiritual firmament in this century has been witness to many
renaissance
movements which were necessitated by the changes taking place all over
the
world, important among them being the East-West encounter. This has not
only
provided a global platform for the major religions of the world but
also
enriched each tradition through dialogue. In the history of Hinduism
the
founding of the Ramakrishna Order was an important milestone.

Swami Vivekananda's name is remembered today for literally taking
Vedanta,
which was the preserve of the orthodoxy till then, to the West. The
disciples of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who formed the nucleus of the
Ramakrishna Order, are acknowledged with gratitude for founding a
spiritual
institution which continues to provide spiritual succor to innumerable
devotees worldwide. Among the direct disciples of Ramakrishna who
progressed
spiritually under his guidance, Swami Shivananda is associated with the
founding of the Ashram at Kashi (Benaras).

Swami Shivananda was called as Mahapurush Maharaj by one and all due to
the
reason that Ramakrishna had addressed him thus, intuiting his spiritual
stature. Known as Taraknath Goshal before renouncing worldly life, even
in
his youth he was drawn to spiritual life, though he led the normal life
of a
householder till he met Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar (Calcutta).

Tarak yearned to meet one who was adept in the practice of Samadhi (yogic trance) and hearing about Ramakrishna who was well-known for his mystic experiences, he sought him and saw for himself at first hand the sage in deep meditation, who even without any introduction asked him to accompany him to the Kali temple to practice meditation. {{Though by temperament Tarak was drawn to meditation on the formless Supreme, the saint advised him to meditate on the Goddess, to drive home the truth that they are but two aspects of the Divine}} (1).

For two years he continued to visit the saint often till he renounced his family and took to spiritual life totally. He saw in Ramakrishna his mother whom he had lost when he was very young who had influenced him spiritually. {{The Guru taught him to revere truth as the greatest penance in this Kali age and true to his vow he never deviated from truth}} (2).

{{His spiritual unfoldment was rapid after initiation by the saint and he continued in the service of his Guru till his end}} (3). After Ramakrishna passed away he and the other fellow-disciples were instrumental in founding the Ramakrishna Order. (Friday, December 18, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Almost all people always first believe in a formless God -may that be an idol of some deity or god or goddess, or nothing -like Allah, in Islam, or a cross, like in Christianity, etc., but as they get curious to know the reality and Truth they seek a Guru, like Tarak sought. The saint, Ramakrishna, though himself must have meditated on his spiritual master or

Guru, Totapuriji, but he did that sitting in front of an idol of Kali in a Kali temple. Simply because he used to live there and make his living as a priest of that temple. Therefore, most people got confused and believed that Ramakrishna meditated on Kali because that is what they saw. Simply because they can't see his mind. People have meditated on God sitting under a Baniyan tree, near a brook, in their own houses, work places or even in dance clubs. What one thinks, remembers, or meditates is only known to the person itself and none else. Every body else may derive inference, imagine and form their own opinion -not the Truth. He may have advised Tarak to meditate on Goddess, Kali, but it is highly doubtful.

(2) In modern times (Kali Yug), Truth is the highest penance, as said, "Saanch Baraabar Tap Nahi, Jhooth Baraabar Paap; Janke Hardaya Saanch Hain, Tanke Hardaya Aap." Means, "There is no penance equal to speaking Truth, there is no sin equal to telling lies; one who behold the Truth -God, in his heart or He has the God."

(3) Spiritual accomplishments of any sincere, eager, yearning seeker begin only after the initiation by a Guru and continues until the disciple has had complete God realization. Service to Guru is the supreme bliss a disciple can get and those are the fortunate ones who get His blessings, because without His wish His service is not possible. In Ramayan, Kagbhusundi said to Garud, "Raam Kripaa Binu Sunu Khagaraaee, Jaani Na Jaai Raam Prabhutaaee;" means, "Without the blessing and grace of God one can not know God." His blessing only comes when we have an yearning for Him.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Transforming power of God's grace

Thu, 17 Dec 1998 07:26:08 -0500

The end of all human endeavors is the realization of man's spiritual nature.

Adi Sankara (a saint) in one of his hymns has reiterated that even though one may be blessed with a good personality, birth in a noble family, riches and high status, and all that are necessary for leading a happy life in the world, {{if not blessed with the grace of the Guru (spiritual teacher) human birth will be in vain}} (1).

{{The spiritual tradition emphasizes that there is no difference between God and the Guru}} (2). When one takes to spiritual life and makes sincere efforts, God responds and helps by appearing in the form of the Guru at the right time. The spiritual bond between the Guru and the disciple is not a temporal one and his grace helps the aspirant along till he realizes God -the end, i.e., liberation.

{{The scriptures make a distinction between a teacher, a preceptor (Acharya) and a Guru. While a teacher only tutors the student in the subject he teaches, a preceptor molds the character of his disciple and instills in him the right values; whereas, a Guru undertakes the responsibility of his disciple's spiritual progress. On the part of the disciple he should repose total faith in his Guru}} (3).

For Arjuna the Lord Himself assumed the role of the Guru and using him as a pretext, taught the sublime philosophical truth in the Bhagavad Gita to the world at large. He revealed His transcendental cosmic form to Arjuna which was an act of His grace. The incidents in the lives of the Pandavas reveal how Lord Krishna's grace protected them from great calamities and enabled them to face them with fortitude, which would not have been possible

otherwise.

The Lord entered their lives first during the unusual circumstances of their marriage to Draupadi, when Arjuna won her hand, but all the brothers had to marry her to fulfill Kunti's words. The Pandavas were living incognito after escaping the threat to their lives planned by Duryodana. After their marriage their identity became known which shocked Duryodana who had given them up for dead.

Not wanting to antagonize them Dritarashtra gave them a barren territory, the Khandavaprastha, as their share of the kingdom. Bhima and Arjuna were naturally furious at the injustice meted to them but at Krishna's insistence accepted it. He enabled them to transform this wasteland into a beautiful city with the help of Indra and named it Indraprastha in his honor. His protective grace extended right till the end of the Mahabharata war and He remained their philosopher and guide throughout their lives. (Thursday, December 17, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Truly, the human birth will not be in vain materially and physically but spiritually it will certainly a waste of whole human life if a person has not realized his own true nature or worth, i.e., spirit or soul. And that is not possible without the grace of Guru. It is said, "Nigura Kare Mukti Ki Asha, Mukti Paai Na Hoe Niraashaa." Means, "A person without a spiritual master expects to get salvation but he gets disappointment not the salvation." Without Guru's grace nobody, even Raam or Krishna, could do what they did. It is said, "Bhajan Bin Praani Re, Tune Neeraa Janam

Gavaayon." Means, "Without Bhajan, O' Living being, the birth is wasted."

And we get to know "Bhajan" only from a Guru, none else, not even God or spirit.

(2) Is there a difference? Yes or No. Yes(?). No, because the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, ever pervading formless God has taken a human form as Guru for his disciples. In Ramayan it is clearly said, "Bhagat Hetu Bhagwaan Prabhu, Raam Dharau Tanu Bhoop" Means, "The God has taken human form as king Raam for the sake of His devotees." The difference being that of form and formless only. The visible and invisible. A trivial difference which persists only up to the point until the spiritual eye does not see the formless God -the spirit. NO, because, what is the difference between the spirit which is free and the spirit which is bound in a shape and form? Is there a difference between water inside a pot and the water outside the pot when the pot is submerged fully in to the waters of the ocean? If No, then the God within the Guru and the God everywhere else is ONE and same. It is clearly stated in Ramayan, "Sagunhi Agunhi Nahi Kachhu Bhedaa, Gavaahin Muni Puraana Budha Bedaa; Aguna Aroopa Alakha Aja Joee, Bhagat Prem Bas Sagun So Hooe." Means, "There is no difference between God with form and formless God, says the sages, ancient history, wise men, and Vedas; One God (spirit) which is without qualities or characteristic (gun), without form and shape, unseen, and immortal, the same God has taken form bound by the love of His devotees." Tulsi said, "Hari Byaapaka Sarvatra Samaanaa, Prem Te Pragat Hohin Men Jaanaa." Means, "God is equally present everywhere, only by Love He appears; thus I know." It can't be stressed enough that only by intense Love or longing or crave for God can a person

see God, as said in Ramayan, "Agun Alep Amaan Ekra, Ramu Sagun Bhaye Bhagat Prem Bas." Means, "The property-less, boundless, infinite, equally present in all God, became a human (like Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, Bahaulaha, etc.) due to the Love of His devotees." Christ said (Bible, John 14.6), "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He did not say this when He was 5, 10, or 20 years old. He said this after a long pause returned from East after self realization to start his short lived ministry in His middle to late twenties. There is no dirth of evidences to the statement "The spiritual traditions emphasizesGuru." It is true by all means. The best evidence is seeing it yourself, experiencing it, having Atma-gyan or self realization, having Atma-bodh. No proof needed then, as said, "Pratyaksh Ko Pramaan Ki Avashyakta Nahi." Means, "The one which you see (through your own eyes) need not require any proof."

(3) A "Sat-Guru" is one who takes His disciples to the "Truth" or God. He makes sure that the disciple understands and experiences it first hand in his own spiritual heart where mind, wisdom, intellect and ego all merge in to and the devotee sees only Him. The "acharya" motivate and make people realize that they are not the (dead) bodies only, which they think, but they are the same "Narayan", just needed to have zeal, eagerness, and sheer determination with strong will power to know themselves and Him. The teacher is merely some body who sells his skill for making his own livelihood and in this process pass on his knowledge and skill to his students.

Truly, every human is "Sat, Chit, Anand", the "Narayan", but due to illusion and attachments with this dead world s/he continues to be the prime party to suffer, until s/he develops an interest and zeal to know the God

and get in touch with a Guru. Then the spiritual life begins and the countless mysteries of this world starts unfolding by itself. Without a true living spiritual master "Sat-Guru" who could have known the ONE absolute Truth. Even the beginning of the universes and life is revealed only by The Person who knows the beginning and end of the time, because time itself is His creation.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Ego, an illusion of the mind

Wed, 16 Dec 1998 12:22:37 -0500

{{The Hindu spiritual tradition has many well-known time-tested techniques for realizing the true nature of the Self (Atman)}} (1). They have been fostered in the traditional method of teaching from Guru to disciple as the practices are esoteric and unique in each spiritual lineage.

{{Among the various techniques, Kriya yoga has gained a lot of appeal in this century, thanks to the efforts of Paramahansa Yogananda who was adept in it and who has popularized it. He was a disciple of Lahiri Mahashay who mastered this esoteric science from a saint in the Himalayas. The most enduring quality of Kriya yoga is that it can be practiced by one and all.

The method has not been documented in book form because as in the case of all spiritual disciplines it is more a matter of experience.

Kriya yoga literally means integration of action. It emphasizes the integration of the separative consciousness, which is due to the unceasing movement of thoughts, with the subtle unitive consciousness experienced when thoughts subside. It is a combination of Hatha, Raja and Laya yogas.

Kriya yoga was essentially a technique to subdue the working of the mind. In

sense perception the sensory input is instantaneous, as for example, the image of a tree is instantaneously formed on the retina when one looks at a tree. But the knowledge that it is a tree arises due to mental cognition.

The process of gaining knowledge necessitates the dichotomy of the object perceived and experienced. This duality is transcended in the experience, "This is a tree."

Thoughts by nature are discontinuous but the mind creates an illusion of continuity. This misconception is the root of ego, the "I". Thoughts arise because of sense perception, but ultimately like the Frankenstein's monster, they continue to exist on their own without any sense stimulus. The mind thus creates its neuroses and ideals.

"Is it possible to see the games that we play with our minds and recognize the network of thought which separates us from the other side of our consciousness?" This recognition is the beginning of the spiritual quest. The constant churning of thoughts has to be stopped.

The first step in the process is meditation. Kriya yoga is a process of healing the dichotomy in the human personality and developing tranquillity of mind, which is its natural state}} (2). This unitive state can be experienced through practice of this yoga and even an occasional glimpse is sufficient to reorient one's life. There is no duality in the unitive state of mind; but at the empirical level it will continue to exist.

(Wednesday, December 16, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The spirit is same in all, every body. It is neither Hindu nor

Christian or Moslem. Yes, this is a fact that India is famous for her spiritual accomplishments, having one of the ancient civilization and recorded history. Although there are many techniques but as many saints and sages have indicated -One with Love and devotion, is the easiest and best.

It can be practiced by any one and everyone interested in it.

Therefore, it

is also known as "Sahaj Yoga." This can only be advised or taught by a bonafide, living spiritual master -Guru, to deserving disciples.

(2) Kriya Yoga like Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, Raj Yoga, Karma Yoga, Saankhya

Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Sanyaas Yoga, etc. can increase spiritual awakening in an

individual and sometimes can liberate him from the cycle of birth and death,

but it appears that to access God's interior circle there is no parallel to

the Bhakti Yoga -the Yoga of Love, devotion and service to God. There remains no ego in Love and service, and humility with total

unconditional

surrender ensues.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Man must discharge his duties

Tue, 15 Dec 1998 12:40:33 -0500

{{Man must discharge his duties}} (1)

The importance of engaging in action in conformity with one's walk of life

has been underscored in the scriptures because worldly life involves action.

Even for those who take to spiritual life, the path of action (Karma yoga)

is considered the first step. While a person who adopts this path for spiritual progress, does so for attaining purity of mind, a realized

person

engages in action for the sake of others in society and not for

personal

gain.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna raises the doubt as to why Lord Krishna should urge him on the path of action when He Himself had indicated that the path of knowledge was superior to it. Arjuna's duty (Svadharm) was unpleasant; being a warrior he had the unpleasant task of engaging in war and bloodshed for the sake of establishing righteousness.

The Lord had dilated on the subject of Self-knowledge to dispel his ignorance, so that he would understand where his duty lay, but Arjuna was looking for an escape route; so he felt that the path of knowledge being superior to that of action he could embark on it which would enable him to get away from the battlefield.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord clarified that even if Arjuna was a man of wisdom (Jnani) he would have to discharge his duty. Accepting the fact that a man of wisdom need not engage in action since he has nothing further to gain, he should do so for the sake of others in society, as they are not as spiritually evolved as he is. He becomes a role model for emulation by others and hence he has a social responsibility.

The necessity for everyone to lead a righteous life (Dharma) can also be appreciated from the fact that it promotes social order. One can imagine the chaos in society if all live according to their whims and fancies. The scriptural injunctions are meant only for ensuring harmony in the world. In the case of the individual who leads a Dharmic life, it helps him to progress spiritually. So it serves a twofold purpose.

There are three sources of guidance for one who wants to follow Dharma. The Vedas are the ultimate authority and hence they are the primary source and the Itihasas, Puranas and the Smrti texts written by sages are the secondary

scriptural source. {{The lifestyle of the cultured, responsible elders in society, though classed as the third source of guidance, is a more powerful influence than the other two because all do not take recourse to scriptural learning. Besides, in day-to-day life it is natural to pick up values from those who are role models like parents and teachers}} (2). (Tuesday, Dec. 15, '98)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Man must discharge his duties. True, but what is man's duty? Man, woman, and children, they all have life in common, known as "Jeev" -a kind of spirit. And the duty of the Jeev is only one; how to meet, merge, unite with its source -the God, after knowing its real entity. This can only be known when the curtains of illusion and attachments laid over it are unveiled or removed. This can be easily done by being in the company of saints and sages of the Truth. Just like it is easier to learn a language by being in the country where that language is spoken, similarly one can know this duty much easier by being in an environment where everyone is performing their duty to realize God.

(2) Very rarely and only a few people read Vedas, Purans, Smratis, and Shrutis but many people come in contact with other people around them. If we have not served our parents, how can our children learn to serve us. Every theory is backed by practice and every theory is proved and strengthened by practical verification and demonstration of facts. If we do not speak truth and tell our children or friend to speak truth, it will not have any effect on them. Some bold and frank might even tell us point blank, "It is easy than done." So we should not say until we experienced it

practically and follow it ourselves. Actually, a professor of say toxicology or anatomy knows a lot then only he tells a little to his students or his audience. No body wants to show their "Trump Card" at the first round. The golden rule, "Practice before you preach" applies so very much to spirituality that Shiva tells to Paravati, "Uma Kahun Me Anubhava Apna, Sat Hari Bhajan Jagat Sab Sapanaa." Means, "Shiva is telling his own experience (not somebody else's read knowledge) that the Truth is God's Word and rest world is like a dream." In spirituality, it is our own experience which reveals God in us instead of books, Vedas, Purans, and other hundreds of scriptures. We can read many different books on swimming or cooking but until we learn swimming or cooking we can not swim or cook. Spirit is beyond all description of writing, reading or telling about it, as said, "Alakh, Akah, Akath, Anaami." That is God -one who walks without legs, one who talks without words, one who sees without eyes, hears without ears. How can that be put in words? How did that infinite became finite in us? A "jigyasu" of spirituality must find it all first hand by his own experience, else the time will keep on ticking. We have to go beyond death to get "Amrat" or to be "Amar", beyond mortal to be "Im-mortal", it is possible not im-possible. The history stands witness for motivation and encouragement to many of us. When it has happened to many it can happen to any. Let that any be us. Let us know Him -the Paramatma, the god of Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva, the God of all gods.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Hard work, must to get Divine grace

Mon, 14 Dec 1998 12:22:20 -0500

A broad classification of human beings' conduct can be made, in

accordance with the contents of the scriptural literature. {{Some do not possess knowledge of the value of the gift of human life and waste it going about aimlessly. They are after worldly pursuits and one has to feel sorry for such men who are ignorant of their potential. In the second category are those who by the grace of the Divine, have gained knowledge but do not use it for proper purpose and they too fritter away their spiritual energy. They have the opportunity to get themselves released from worldly bondage but they are involved in purposeless activities and thus get lost}} (1).

What the scriptures emphasize is the importance of service to God. This can be done in some form like help to others, worship, meditation and reciting God's names. That is men's duty but what is more significant is that such a service should be done in time. For instance {{charity at the proper time alone will be meaningful}} (2). There is, however, one unfailing source from whom mankind can expect service being done at the most opportune time. That is God. Religious literature's point out that God's duty towards His devotees combines both. Lord extends His service to those who seek His guidance and also at the needed hour. Saints have used a very fine expression in their works to refer to Lord's "service" to devotees in response to their pleas in time, when they faced distress. On devotees' part, they must adopt the motto "work is worship".

{{The typical example of the two types of men referred to above was explained by the following example. The fish exists in water consuming dirty waste and putrid stuff. It can take valuable articles made available by nature but fails to do so. For the other type, a bird answers the description as it can easily identify what is good and what is to be rejected but yet it often goes only after waste material and at times tries to catch the fish which, as pointed out, is full of filth}} (1).

The stress in our holy texts is that we must work hard, use our

knowledge to
obtain salvation and also serve, as part of our spiritual obligations,
humanity and that too in time. God is kind to attend to the needs of
His
devotees when they require.

Devotees have to pray to God not only to protect but also help them at
the
needed hour. God will surely respond. Devotees should also put in hard
work
to obtain divine grace.(Monday 12/14/98)

***** COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Most of us -humans, do not know what we have. Because, we are
used to
see outwardly only and can not, rather do not, see at us ourselves with
our
own eyes or senses (we hear others but not our own inner voice, etc.)
we
most all most always remain outbound. Very rarely we can see or hear
inwardly things. We always look at others and want that for us. We
rarely
look at our own bare need and feel happy that it is satisfied. Since
we do
not stop or cease looking outwardly we are tempted to shift our demand
from
need to want, and we never can satisfy those wants until death.
Actually,
those are other's -some body else's originated wants, not our (wants).
And
those are countless because others are countless -5 billion people plus
animals and other plant species. Our time of 100 years (human life
span)
passes soon and we get in to trouble only to repent. Sita wanted
golden
deer, everybody knew that golden deer do not exist, yet she wanted it.
Wants are never satisfied, they result in miseries. Hence, wise man's
want,
rather need, is elimination of desires and wants.

(2) Just like there is a proper time for charity, more important the
charity
must be given only to a proper person who is capable of accepting it to
consummate it in His fire of wisdom, penance and asceticism. Thereby

it yields no result. Else the result of charity will be abundance of piousness assuring the donor a place in an environment with flourishing economy and prosperity, such as in a noble or princely family or in an affluent country, whether in this or subsequent life. Kabir said, "Daan Diye Dhan Na Ghate, Nadi Na Ghate Neer; Apni Aankho Dekh Lo, Kah Gaye Daas Kabira." Means, "Charity does not diminish the wealth, the river does not lack water; look at your self, experience it, such says the servant (of God) Kabir." This will then make one richer and richer with the possibilities of enhancing his vices such as greed, lust, anger, pride, etc. and diminishing virtues like charity, generosity, kindness, mercifulness, Truth loving, love, service, devotion to God, etc. The result is an assured hell in future, keeping the man in cycle, never to come out of it, until his acts becomes resultless. That is why, in Gita, Krishna said to Arjuna, "Do your duty devotedly and offer all your deeds -good and bad, to me. Your all deeds will burn away in my fire of wisdom and I will make you free of the cycle of birth and death." O' Arjuna, please seek a Krishna..

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Need to observe moral injunctions

Sat, 12 Dec 1998 13:36:20 -0500

{{The attitude of men in general can be classified into four broad categories. There are the great who are rare to find as they sacrifice their own interests to further others' needs. Under the second group fall those who live their lives enjoying the fruits of their activities and help others too without their interests being affected.

The third set of men destroy others and thrive on them. The fourth go about indulging in activities destructive of their and others' interests}} (1). "It is enough if we are able to live up to the ideal of the second group and aspire for the first," says an emperor-turned-poet in one of his classics in which he has bundled innumerable morals for men to avoid pitfalls and lead a virtuous life.

This great reformer pleads for a normal existence discharging one's obligations, living in amity with others without tension and strife.

One should be courteous to one's relatives, kind to strangers, careful and cautious towards the wicked, affable to the virtuous, polite towards those in power, humble before the learned, brave in dealing with opponents and patient with others. These attributes, he adds, will promote stability in the affairs of men.

These sentiments have been expressed by Bhartruhari (tradition places him in the first half of the century before Christ) in one of his three works, each containing 100 verses. They bring out the essence of Hindu wisdom, gleaned from ancient lore and the schools of Indian philosophy. One of the works deals with justice and morals, the second with renunciation and detachment while the third is concerned with love. In the "Neeti Satakam", he asks men not to lose self-respect in the midst of even overwhelming trials. Another virtue to which he refers to is the development of perseverance. The third is about benevolence or service to our fellow men followed by moral courage. Life, according to him, should be purposeful and meaningful.

Bhartruhari sees the sources of all our trouble in our lack of faith in God. {{He says that in the enjoyment of desires, these (desires) are not exhausted but we are weakened}} (2). "We will grow old but aspire to remain young." He describes a perfect man as one who shows fortitude in adversity, forgiveness in prosperity and reveals his virtue amidst great troubles as the sandalwood, even cut into pieces, exudes fragrance. In one verse, the poet points out that refraining from destroying another life, self-restraint as regards appropriating the wealth of others, truthful speech, charity at the right time and according to means, impeding the stream of greed, humility towards elders, compassion to all creatures - these pave the way for happiness, commonly referred to in all scriptures. (Saturday, December 12, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Similarly there are four types of people -one, the great wise

man, a few, who do not do mistake, second group of people are those above average people who learn from them and the following other two group people's mistakes. These people make a few mistakes and they observe rest people and are wise enough in learning from other's mistakes. The third group of people are below average who makes mistakes and learn from their own mistakes and do not repeat the same mistake again. While the last group of people are those who makes mistakes lots of mistakes , so not learn from them and repeat them often.

(2) Desires are never fulfilled. Before one desire is satisfied another is born. Also the end result of fulfillment of desires is to weaken our selves. Desires are born from senses (Indriyaas -5 senses of knowledge, viz. sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, and other 5 organs or senses of actions) and Indriyaas are never satisfied. In Ramayan, it is said, "Ehi Tan Kar Phal Vishaya Na Bhaaee, Svagau Svalpa Anta Dukhadaaee; Nar Tan Paai Vishaya Man Dehin, Palati Sushaa Te Sath Vish Lehee." Means, "After getting this body don't go in sense gratification, there is great momentary (pleasure) but the end is horrible; (people) getting human body and keeping (their) mind on sense gratification, such idiots only exchange honey for poison." People who are not contended, who do not control their desires or sense gratification do not accelerate their spiritual progress. Ramayan further states, "Indree Dwaar Jharokhaa Naanaa, Tahan Tahan Sur Bethe Kari Thaanaa;; Indrinha Suranhan Gyaan Sohaaee, Vishaya Bhoga Par Preeti Sadaaee." Means, "There are many senses, and each sense has a presiding deity; senses and deities never like wisdom because they always love to dwell on sense gratification." LOVE is ONE. How can we love God if we love to fulfill our desires "Vishaya -Bhog" -may it be eating or seeing or one of the many other.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Realized souls see God everywhere

Fri, 11 Dec 1998 12:11:03 -0500

As the chariot does not worry or concern itself as to whether it travels in the right direction, let us leave the decision making to God whether what we do is of great or little importance. The only way to overcome egoism is to

constantly practice and make a habit of thinking that God alone is the Doer. So, when the time comes to leave, our mind would already have been centered on God and realized Him. We should not be deceived by the parts we play and the qualities associated with them in our present life, no more than an actor who is not fooled into the unreality of the play. Lust, anger and greed are the soul's highway robbers. Where such qualities prosper, hell indeed is nearer.

These are some of the lovely imageries of a great saint of Maharashtra who has left a rich legacy in the form of a brilliant commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Its unsurpassable and innumerable illustrations and 20,000 couplets show that the young spiritual leader, Jnaneshwar, was but a manifestation of the Supreme Being. At the Pandaripur temple, he sang, "One who stands before Lord Panduranga even for a moment, with exclusive devotion, shall have all four types of salvation (entering God's abode, remaining near God, attaining His likeness and total merger in Him). Walk in the path of righteousness and receive instructions from saints and scriptures." Jnaneshwar compares a man with an impure mind even if he performs good actions, to a corpse adorned with ornaments.

{{The young saint, whose powers were challenged by some priests}} (1), humbled them by quoting from the Gita that {{a realized person sees the Lord present in the heart of a scholar, a cow, an elephant, a dog, the so-called untouchables, and every where}} (2). Placing his palm over the head of {{a buffalo, he prayed that the animal should chant Vedic Mantras which it did}} (3). But Jnaneshwar was quite aware that {{the realization of God and not the attainment of special powers (to perform miracles) is the purpose of all spiritual disciplines}} (4).

According to him, though sects develop peculiar rites and customs, as a

whole they belong to the same uniform ocean of knowledge where man seeks his redemption from a seemingly perpetual gyration of births and deaths, all triggered by his unquenchable thirst for the three evils. Just as the sky is mirrored in an ocean and is not forbidden from being reflected in a pond, God's grace appears in all. "Even the worst sinner can reform by thinking of God."

Devotees believe that the saint lives forever in the cave into which he entered, reciting the ninth chapter of the Gita with his spiritual body to bless people. (Friday December 11, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Albert Einstein said, "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds." Priests and Brahmins in India has always challenged and opposed many great saints, just because saints tell the ONE Truth and priests and Brahmins engulfed in rituals, customs, and countless scriptures befool people for their own personal gain and business. The life history of many saints like Kabira, Prahlaad, Dhruva, etc. vouches for this.

(2) The Lord is every where. Where He is not? He is in the particle of dust, a molecule of air, a drop of water, in plants, animals, and humans, in fact, every where. Tulsi said, in Ramayan, "...., Siyaa Raam May Sab Jag Jaanaa." Means, "Know the whole world is like Lord God and His abode."

(3) A buffalo, or for that matter any living object, has a soul or spirit; why would she not chant Vedic mantras or anything what a realized person

wishes. The sound we speak comes from God through a series of different named sound, known as "Paraa", "Pashchayanti", "Madhyamaa" and "Baikhari".

The last one is the one we hear. A realized soul initiates and knows "Paraa", thus communicates with other souls at that level, not at the "Baikhari" level (which is heard).

(4) Aspirants of spiritual knowledge and servants of God never ever use spiritual accomplishments for cheap miracles and magic's. They are not magicians showing miraculous show for money. Hence, get with the God's Word, and meditate on Him with Love and devotion, all eight "siddhees" follow suit un-sought..

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Craving for worldly objects is a sin -Questions

Thu, 10 Dec 1998 10:55:53 -0500

Good points. Please see the text {{--}} for response.

Thursday, December 10, 1998 10:13 AM

Subject: RE: Craving for worldly objects is a sin -**Questions**

How can you tell if one is close to God ? (in reference to your 1st answer)

{{By their thoughts, speech, actions, and way of living.}}

Do you mean to say that thousands of businessman in India who prey on poor

people to get rich (like artificially inflated onion price and other commodities) has committed sin in God's eye ? {{YES.}} If they do then why they

do not suffer for their actions while they are alive ? {{They do suffer, some

have sickness, some do not have children and long for them, some has marital

problems, others are tied up in court battles, etc.}} Let us not talk about

next birth or reincarnation where he will be born as a worm or snake or some

bad creature to pay his due of present deeds. Nobody can prove that he will

suffer in his next birth ? Can you ? Can we say for sure "No body" ?

{{The

world has 5 billion people, we can only say I can not prove it. But if you determined you can. There is nothing which you can not prove to yourself by experiencing the reality within you.}}

Craving for worldly objects is a sin

Thu, 10 Dec 1998 09:12:46 -0500

A philosopher-poet who was deeply religious and who was keen on getting rid of his worldly bondage has brilliantly portrayed the evils to which a man will succumb, comparing them to a tree. According to him, anger is its fruits, pride its flowers, deceit its branches and leaves while the root is greed. The entire tree symbolizes "vice" with greed making the person to develop deep attachment to worldly objects.

{{How to escape the influence of the evil of greed which results in deep attachment, the poet asks and replies that even as diamond alone can cut another diamond and a thorn alone will have to be used to remove another thorn, the tendency to be greedy can be curbed by another facet of greed. Instead of showing attachment towards worldly objects, one's attention should be directed towards the Divinity. We can be "avaricious" in seeking the grace of God and in requesting Him to enable us to lead a life of peace and purity. We can be "greedy" to acquire spiritual knowledge and to adopt steps to obtain salvation. "Let me possess a deep desire to develop forgiveness, politeness, straightforwardness and peacefulness, making any soul harbor only joy and preventing any other corrupting thoughts." }}

(1)

When desires are checked, there will be no need to get attached to worldly objects. There will be no scope to become jealous about others in

possession
of more valuable articles than what we have. The poet prays that his
"greed"
should indeed result in his eyes enjoying God's different forms, his
ears
listening to God's praise, his tongue glorifying the Lord and the nose
smelling the fragrance of flowers which adorn Him. "I do not want
wealth,
power or position. All I ask you is to make me destroy the four words -
me,
mine, good and bad. If this is not possible, make me at least refrain
from
uttering these words. I realize that nothing will accompany me when I
leave
this world, not the riches, not my status, not my kith and kin. Only my
soul
will be there".

Even the very thought of a desire to possess an object that is with
others
is a sin, saint says. To an ordinary person, the craving to acquire
some
article which is not with him but which is in the hands of another
person
and which he is not able to obtain, may not appear wrong but it is the
origin of all succeeding misdeeds. When his desires remain unfulfilled,
he
will get frustrated and may adopt any method to secure it. Such an act
is
like a seed which later grows into a mighty tree. The tree grows but
one
does not see it in the seed. One who is free from greed will manage his
wealth and use it for beneficent purposes. (Thursday Dec. 10, '98)

*****COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) If we try to leave greed for worldly things we will pick it up more
and
more or stronger and stronger, but if we try to pick up God's Word,
spiritual reading and knowledge, did we not leave the greed for at
least
that much time? When we leave home every morning we have a goal to
reach
office, hence the home is left without even trying to leave it. When
we

take a step forward the previous foot is raised automatically, we don't have to try to lift it deliberately, else we won't even have a thought of taking the next step and we'll be lost. Come to my house and your house is left behind. You did not leave your house, you still know it where it is and you can go there when ever you wish. We do not leave greed for worldly things we have to change its direction, we should be greedy to know God.

A newly born child cries of hunger and thinks that he'll starve to death, because he does not know that his mother is also feeling eager to feed him else she will also be uncomfortable (in not feeding him). His food is already there so close to him but he does not know. Similarly, everyone of us is free but due to ignorance we think we are bound by worldly things. In Ramayan, it is said, "....., Bandhyo Keer Markat Ki Naai." Means, "....., tied like a parrot and his trap." I will explain it in little more detail, when they catch parrots, they make a trap by simply tying loosely enough a small piece of stick (with a corn on the cob) to a post set in a field such that the stick only tilt down when the parrot sits on it. Parrot first come there out of greed to eat corn (instead of eating fresh fruits, her usual food) then sits on it. The stick tilts down, the parrot hangs himself upside down and thinks that she will fall down and die, so she tightens her grip until the parrot keeper catches her. The parrot did have her wings in tact and in reality is free to fly but out of ignorance and fear of death she clings on to the trap until caught. Same thing happens to "jeev" or humans, they hang themselves upside down for over 9 months, then they are caught, due to their own ignorance and fear of death, in the greed for worldly things one after other until the death catches them and they go

from
one trap to another, from one life to another. We are free, but if we
think
we are not then we are not free, there is no help except that some of
our
brother tells us, "look , you are also free like me. Why are you
suffering
all your life?" Can we ever be free of indebtedness to such a merciful
Lord
who guides us to God?

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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One of my friend asked me two questions:

(1) If some body is sick and suffering, will "upvas" or fasting and
prayers done by his relatives and dear ones help alleviate the sickness
and
suffering? YES or NO.

(2) Some body has a business, buying goods and marking the price up for
100
or 200% profit and selling it. Is it considered a cheating in God's
eyes?
YES, definitely.

In short, the answers/opinion is written above beside questions. The
following explanation is offered:

(1) First of all, just going hungry without food is not "upvas". Also
some people don't eat certain usual food, instead they eat fruits,
"mava
barafi" and "rabadi" or drink fruit juices and milk, etc., that is not
the
"upvas" either. "Upvas" is a disciplined eating, none or one time a
day,
while keeping their thoughts and deeds pious and clean, not hurting or
killing anybody by deeds or even thoughts, and remembering and praying
God,
during the entire period of "upvas", for a specific purpose for which
the
"upvas" is kept (in this case for the sick person's good health).

"Upvas" increases one's own will power which is very close to "Atma-bal" or power of the self or spirit. If people, who have strong will power doing such "upvas", are **close to God (Up+Vas)**, God hears their prayer and the sick person gets better health. This all happens due to the person who is near God and who is determined to use his or her spiritual power or will power to obtain relief in the sick person's health.

But as people gets closer to God, they do not interfere with God's will (who is impartial and let law of Karma's prevail) and of course if asked by God (your own inner voice, different from thoughts) of your opinion or wish about the suffering person and if you do not leave it back on God, you will always tell all sick people should be blessed with good health and God blesses him good health. So, yes, it helps to pray and fast.

If the prayers and fasting are for selfish interest and attachment with the sick person and if the person who fasts himself or herself is not disciplined, clean, honest, and close to God, the prayers and fasting do no good. So, no, it does not help.

(2) Yes, it is cheating not to all people but to a few. But it is definitely illegal, immoral, and unethical to do so. It is actually a greed -the seed or root of all evils, which kills the person himself. There are many stories and narratives documenting the ill effects of greed. Greed is a vice, not a virtue. Today's Food for thoughts "Craving for worldly objects is a sin" is a classic example.

Fixing a very high price to keep a big profit when the merchant is already very affluent is cheating those people who need that item and do not have enough resources to buy it. It is not cheating those people who are already

much affluent and can afford to pay for it, even if it was marked up 300 or 400 %.

Fixing high price for goods when there is a need for it, when the goods are essential commodities -such as water, natural gas, electricity, woolen clothes in winter and fans in summer, bread, onions, etc., and are badly needed is illegal specially when it is done in collaboration with associations, groups, unions, and other merchants.

It is immoral because keeping high profit when you are already affluent and depriving others who need it is against good conscious. You make somebody suffer in cold, you don't sell him the blanket at a price where he or she can afford it without you losing any money, you have no mercy, pity, kindness, and generosity. Then you have no conscious, as such it is against moral principles. It is not virtuous.

It is unethical because in human values and ethics when one human's actions afflict injury or pain to other human for unnecessary, unneeded gain to the former is considered immoral, bad and unwanted. There is a good principle of economics, says, "Needs can be fulfilled, wants can never be." A bad business policy is that if the market can sustain higher price, if people can afford to pay it is okay to charge higher profit.

But, for all God fearing decent people, in God's eyes, unnecessary hoarding of commodity and high price fixing when you don't need that high profit is considered cheating to your own self, rather robbing your own self, killing your own conscious and becoming a living dead person. Actually God has blindfolded eyes. He is impartial, judge (like a blindfolded statue of judgment with a balance), just watching our actions doing its results but Himself doing nothing. He only listens to His devotees and out of His

own
sweet will acts and intervenes when He wishes. It is said, "Saain
Utnaa
Dijiye, Jaame Kutumba Samaay; Naa Me Bhukhaa Rahu, Naa Sadhu Bhukhaa
Jaay."
Means, "Lord, give me just enough that my family (people who are in my
sight
when I eat) can just live-in it, more specifically neither I remain
hungry
nor any guest goes unattended and hungry.

It is well known that any thing we eat more than we need is a cause of
indigestion. Excess of wealth is certainly a cause for bondage, at one
or
the other point we had to relinquish all interest in wealth, material,
physical things, relations, etc. in order to do good to your own self.
Tulsi left his wife and family, Surdasji did the same, Buddha left the
palace and kingdom, Dhruva did, Prahlada did, Gandhi did, and all those
saints who achieved the state of "Nirvan" or "Moksha" did. Thus
charging
more than reasonable is not good for the spiritual health of the
merchant,
just as putting too much salt in the bread is not good for your taste
and
physical health.

So we must make our own decision in this regards wisely. If any one
has
other thoughts and want to supplement on this topic please do so. Thank
you
in anticipation.

Religion helps one lead peaceful life

Wed, 9 Dec 1998 08:25:46 -0500

Saints and sages (who were the exponents of Hinduism) had never claimed
anything as their own achievement. Ever established in the supreme
state of
absolute fullness, they found it difficult to express their experience
of
the Supreme Truth in words. Yet out of compassion for those who are in
search of God and are groping in darkness, they have prayed to God that
in
their efforts to speak and put down in writing and convey the Divine
message
through words, they should not distort Truth, "Give us the ability to

express our experiences properly". Their writings are sources of power and inspiration for the entire mankind.

{{These men of wisdom did not form a separate religion}} (1). They gave importance to human values and spiritual Truths. Their prayers were astonishing because their only request was "May the whole world live in happiness; may contentment, peace, perfection and auspiciousness prevail in all." Religion gives what the world can never provide. What a man craves is peace within. Peace is not something which is gained when all desires are fulfilled. As long as the mind exists, desires will surface and problems will continue. There is peace when all thoughts subside. To lead man to the realization of his true nature and to transform him is the goal of the "Eternal Religion." The latter does not ask them to believe in a God seated on a golden throne, high above the clouds. He is not a limited being. He is all- pervasive. To believe in His powers and the practice of religious principles will fill human life with vitality. Religion and worship of God eliminate narrow mindedness. Unfortunately, the same religion has become the breeding ground for negative qualities. Instead of moving towards God, owing to the unhealthy competitive attitude, people have lost their capacity to love and in the name of religion, they have started dragging down themselves.

It is said that countries claim about their "progress" in many fields but as a whole their growth is stunted. A man involved in a law suit and who somehow wanted to win, suggested to his lawyer about bribing the judge. The shocked lawyer chided him for this very idea. However the decision was favorable and the client told the lawyer that "he did send bribe but he did so on behalf of our opponent." This is an example of how many people's minds work in the present days. "When we meditate and pray as a group, the

life
energy of all of us will harmoniously flow into a single stream
spreading
divine fragrance, soaked in the sweetness of love and creating
vibrations of
peace." (Wednesday, December 09, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) True, they advised their disciples to realize God and be like
them, but
their disciples , out of love and devotion towards them, instead formed
an
organized religion in their name. Buddha was a Kshatriya and after
self
realization he preached the Truth to his followers but they made a
religion
after Buddha's name. Similarly, Jesus Christ was a Jew and during his
short
lived ministry he taught people to realize God but his chosen disciples
formed Christianity after his name. Even Kabir told people to explore
the
Truth in themselves but after his death his followers were called Kabir
Panthi and a sect or religion called Kabir Panth evolved. All saints
emphasized on self realization, spiritual awakening and being
spiritually
knowledgeable.

They never formed any religion. Spirit or Truth never has any religion
or
label attached to it. These great sages and saints were the Truth
itself,
they were the spirit itself, how can they form a separate religion away
from
the Truth. Would that not make it false? They knew very well that
anything
other than the Truth is false, so are all these man made religions.
There
are saints now also who though explains the fundamental original
meaning of
all these prevalent religions, always guide and motivate their beloved
disciples to know the true religion -call it a religion of mankind, or
self
or spiritual realization.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Religious rites linked with Nature

Tue, 8 Dec 1998 12:44:12 -0500

{{Religion helps in establishing and maintaining harmony among human beings, between an individual and society and between him and Nature}} (1). Our ancestors gave great importance to Nature worship in religious practices.

They foresaw that man, due to his selfishness, may forget Nature and that the future generations would suffer due to their dissociation from her. Hence they linked each religious rite with Nature and thereby succeeded in developing an emotional bond between them. The ancients worshipped trees and plants. Thus religion teaches man to love the entire creation.

The scriptures laid down that a householder should perform five duties daily. Among them is to serve all living beings, through the care extended to animals and plants. In the past, family members never ate before feeding their domestic animals and birds and watering plants and trees, thereby pleasing Nature in gratitude for her kind gifts. Through these rituals and different types of sacrifices, human beings learnt to live in harmony with the society and Nature.

Those who declare that religion is merely a collection of blind beliefs may not spare even a moment to try to understand the scientific principles behind spiritual practices. For instance, scriptures prescribe certain methods to fetch rain. The wise knew that the purity of water thus obtained was far superior to that received by artificial means like cloud-seeding.

Reference is made to modern science saying it is harmful to look directly at

the Sun during solar eclipse. The same caution was tendered by sages centuries ago. Using a primitive but effective method, they looked only at the Sun's image reflected in water in which cow dung was dissolved.

The ancients worshipped the cow and the earth. The wall of separation between human beings and Nature has been created mainly by the selfish attitude of the humans. They think that Nature's bounty is only for exploitation by them to meet their selfish ends.

In reality, Nature is but God's visible form which we can behold and experience through our senses. Prayers will restore our harmony with her, which creates the circumstances through which an individual soul can reach the Supreme Being.

Scientific inventions are highly beneficial but they should not be against Nature. Science has discovered that plants tremble with fear when we go near them to pluck their leaves but ages ago, sages, having understood this truth, lived a life of complete harmlessness. (Tuesday 12/08/1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It has been observed that the so called religions are one of the main causes of disturbances, violence and killings in today's world. We are seeing that Catholic and Protestants, -both Christians, are fighting in Northern Ireland for last over 35 years; Jews and Moslems (Palestinians) are fighting since World War 2, although for land but more often it divides on religious grounds; Hindus and Moslems had fought three wars between two nations -India and Pakistan, again on the pretext of land but the basis of partition or division of land itself was on religious differences.

Among Hindus themselves there was untouchability, different rituals, sects, beliefs, etc. dividing Hindus. Had the so called Brahmins not exploited the rest of the innocent and ignorant masses of India for eras? There have been numerous riots and violence due to religions throughout the world and

this still continues. Does all this not tell us that these religions only divide people, create animosity, arguments and fights among people? But a true religion does unite people, establish harmony, peace and good will among people. Is this not enough proof and evidence that these so called religions are all man made and none of them fit the above definition of a true religion.

So then, what is the true religion? Two points are put forth here to explain it. ONE -it appears that English word "religion" may have been derived from the Latin "Legion" means unite and re means again. Thus re-legion or religion (distorted over time) means reunite. Now, reuniting can not be of the bodies, human bodies, because these are perishable anyway.

Hence, it has to be of the spirit or soul. Our soul is a part of God -the universal soul, as said in the Ramayan, "Ishwar Ansh Jeev Avisaashi,"

Means, "This soul is a part of God and is immortal." This soul got detached from God after conception and birth. It remembered God while it was in the mother's womb, but after birth due to sense gratification it gradually forgot God completely and engulfed itself in worldly attachments and illusionary forces, which are strong and overpowering. Thus a true religion

is a understanding and means to do whatever necessary to unite our soul with God. This is possible only by two salient factors -One, our zeal and eagerness to know God, and Two, the company of a preceptor who knows God.

It is said, "Chelaa Guru Me, Guru Me Raam; Bhakti Mahaatma, Nyaaraa Naam."

Means, "The disciple is merged in to the teacher and teacher in to God; the importance of devotion and the God's Name or Word is beyond any thing else."

That is a true religion. Since the soul is everywhere, more pronounced in humans than (gradually diminishing in values) in animals, plants and stones, brooks, rivers, etc. -all combined, call it Nature; since the

same
soul is in us too and in other humans; and knowing this fact, since
nobody
wants to hurt his own self or soul, he or she will not dare to hurt
others.
This understanding only can and will bring harmony, peace, love among
people
and between an individual and Nature.

Two -religion is translated in Hindi as "Dharma." In Vedas it is
stated,
"Dharati So Dharma." Means, "one (which is) embodied in our selves is
Dharma." This simply states what we should speak, do, think, etc. so
that
we can know the Truth, -the God and embody Him in ourselves. It is a
practice, not a theory; It is an experiment with the Truth, not merely
a
philosophy; It is a reality, not a virtual imagination; It is the Truth
not
a False pretext or hope. This kind of religion which enables you to
unite
yourself with God will fit the definition of a true religion. It is
open to
all irrespective of their gender, so called religions, race, caste,
creed,
national origin, language, age, beliefs, color, or any other
differences.
It is spiritual knowledge, nothing to do with the matter and material,
physical, or even metaphysical things, rituals, cultures, customs, etc.
Call it anything, it is ONE to experience it. Practice it, it is said
"Practice maketh a man perfect." Aim to know Him -the perfect, the God.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Tue, 8 Dec 1998 08:02:45 -0500

* **God won't ask** how many people you knew here on earth, He will
only ask if you know his son Jesus Christ.

*God won't ask how many good deeds you did. He will ask what
you
did to give glory to Him.

What God Won't Ask

1. God won't ask what kind of fancy car you drove. He will ask how many people you took to temple who didn't have transportation.
2. God won't ask the square footage of your house. He will ask how many people you helped who didn't have a house.
3. God won't ask how many fancy clothes you had in your closet. He will ask how many of those clothes you gave away to the Salvation Army.
4. God won't ask what social class you were in. He will ask what kind of "class" you displayed.
5. God won't ask how many material possessions you had. He will ask whether those material possessions dictated your life.
6. God won't ask what your highest salary was. He will ask if you trampled over any people to obtain that salary.
7. God won't ask how much overtime you worked. He will ask did you work overtime for your family.
8. God won't ask how many promotions you received. He will ask what you did to promote others.
9. God won't ask what your job title was. He will ask did you perform your job to the best of your ability.
10. God won't ask how many promotions you took to chase a dollar bill. He will ask how many promotions you refused to advance your family's quality of life.
11. God won't ask how many times you didn't run around on your spouse. He will ask how many times you did.
12. God won't ask how many degrees you had. He will ask how many people you thanked for helping you get those degrees.

13. God won't ask what your parents did to help you. He will ask what you did to help your parents.
14. God won't ask what you did to help yourself. He will ask what you did to help others.
15. God won't ask how many friends you had. He will ask how many people you were a friend to.
16. God won't ask what you did to protect your rights. He will ask what you did to protect the right of others.
17. God won't ask what neighborhood you lived in. He will ask what other neighborhoods you visited.
18. God won't ask how many times you told the truth. He will ask how many times you told a lie.
19. God won't ask about the color of your skin. He will ask about the color of your heart.
20. God won't ask how many times your deeds matched your words. He will ask how many times they didn't.

All of us will stand before God someday..
and everything we did, said, & thought
will all come to light.
I don't know about you but
I have some things I want to make right.!!!

Monday, 7 Dec 1998 12:17:51 -0500
Infinite compassion of the Almighty

One becomes easily satiated with sense experiences because of the limitation of the senses which tire after sometime. But it is not so with regard to spiritual experience. {{In the initial stages of spiritual life a

spiritual aspirant can experience God only through the senses, like beholding His beautiful form in images and listening to His glory}} (3). As he evolves further he attains one- pointedness of mind which leads to {{the state of union (Samadhi), in which the senses and the mind cease to function. The beauty of spiritual experience is such that one never feels satiated with it and craves for more and more}} (4).

This fact is highlighted in the Bhagavata Purana in Pareekshit's case. As he listened to the Lord's deeds (Lila) in His different incarnations narrated to him by Sage Suka, the king gave up food and even water, his mind having attained total concentration. When the sage started his narration on the Lord's incarnation as Krishna, the king beseeched him to expound on this elaborately.

It is said that the sage narrated how even the birth of the Lord took place under extraordinary circumstances thus revealing His divine nature. Even as an infant His acts were supernatural like His killing the ogress Putana who visited Gokul with the intention of killing Him, at the instance of Kansa. But, the Lord's compassion was such that He granted the supreme state of liberation even to one who meant ill to Him. Lest that Kansa get wind of Krishna's birth and His whereabouts, even His naming ceremony was performed in secrecy. Vasudeva sent Sage Gargacharya, his family priest to Nandagopa's house for the purpose.

As the divine child grew He became the cynosure of all eyes in Gokul and the simple cowherd maidens reveled in His pranks and vied with one another to be

with Him. They abandoned their hearths and homes and rushed to His side, unaware that it was His divine nature which attracted them. Even when the small child performed superhuman deeds it did not arouse their suspicion; such was the spell He had cast on them.

Of all His acts of grace, that showered on His foster-mother Yashoda is unparalleled. The Supreme Being whom the Yogis and the sages try to capture in their hearts with their penance and austerities, allowed Himself to be bound by Yashoda with a rope. She tried securing Krishna with a rope to punish Him for breaking the butter-churning pot, but failed in her repeated attempts as the rope fell short every time. Seeing His mother's predicament {{the Lord out of infinite compassion allowed Himself to be bound}}

(5).
(Monday Dec. 07, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Self is also known as Spirit or Soul. Thus self-realization is spiritual knowledge, or "Atma-gyan" or "Brahma-gyan" or "Brahma-vidya." Therefore, this is also known as knowledge of God or God-realization as it is said that , "Atma So Paramatma."

(2) To act detached is the most difficult thing. How do we then act detached? Gandhi said, "Hate the sin and not the sinner." Usually it is very hard to separate the sin from the sinner because the sinner is the bearer or doer of the sin. However, with spiritual knowledge, we look at the spirit of any body including that of the sinner which is the same as any other spirit like our own. Then we will not dislike the sinner but we would refrain from doing any sin. We would then be acting detached. Company of saints enable us to look at the spirit, the live force, and not the dead

bodies.

(3) This indicates that God has to be in a form, most preferential a human form, so that our senses can register Him. Though form only we can go to formless.

(4) This is the state like sleep or trance. You get a glimpse of the Lord and you never want to be separate from it. You wish you can remain in that sleep seeing the Lord and getting abundant of bliss. Your mind become so still that it only sees one thing and none else. It ceases to wander from thought to thought. Since all senses are controlled by mind, none of the senses bother you because your servant mind is controlled by you. You become pure soul or spirit and bliss.

(5) Without God's will one can not know God. However, God will only will when the individual will want to know Him. God knows everybody, but everybody does not know God. Hence, those individuals who are determined with steadfastness to know Him, when He pleases, He reveals Himself to them.

Garud -the Vishnu's carrier, got confused about Rama and doubted whether Rama was God. Therefore, to dispel his doubt Rama -the God, got Himself tied down by a serpent and when Garud saw this he (out of his pride that even he can kill a snake, if Rama is really a God He would have easily killed it) thought that Rama was not God. He asked to Narad, who directed him to Brahma, then to Shiva, and finally to Kagbhusundiji (a saint) who dispelled his doubt and Garud knew about God -through a saint only. In Ramayan, Kagbhusundiji said to Garud, "Raam Krapaa Binu Sunu Khagraai, Jaani Na Jaai Raam Prabhutaai." Means, "Without God's grace, O, Garud listen, one can not know God and His greatness." Similarly, without God's own will

(to be punished by Yashoda) Yashoda could not punish Krishna. Krishna did that to reveal Himself to Yashoda, but she could not understand Krishna due to attachment and illusion. Saints can dispel the darkness of illusion and attachment, therefore, wise men seek a saint to seek God.

With the blessings from God.

Servant of His servants

Ds

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Saturday Dec. 05, 1998

Knowledge alone can liberate man

Life in the world continues to be a struggle as long as a person does not realize the true nature of his Self (Atman). As long as he identifies himself with his mind-body complex because of ignorance, its afflictions continue to trouble him. The way out of this struggle is by {{Self-realization}} (1). The scriptures have prescribed different methods to enable an aspirant to embark on the spiritual path according to his capacity.

The stages in which spiritual progress can proceed with success involves first an active life, the path of action (Karma yoga), during which he masters the way to {{act in the world with detachment}} (2). The result of practicing the path of action is purification of the mind which is necessary for further spiritual evolution. Ignorance of the nature of the Self, which is the cause of bondage, can be removed only by spiritual knowledge. Hence the path of action cannot by itself lead to Self- realization.

It is said that after the spiritual aspirant succeeded in the path of knowledge (Jnana yoga) struggles in life stopped. Graduation to the path of knowledge is the fruit of the path of action. Whatever man seeks in the world, bliss, peace and eternity, can be realized only within - the Self. Without realizing this he struggles to find them outside and is

frustrated
because he cannot find them.

So one who reveals in his Self is complete. He is content "to be" and
does
not depend on others or the material world for his happiness.

Contentment
results because there is no scope for comparison because this is the
highest
state and there is nothing further to realize.

Man cannot derive contentment in relative achievements because when he
sets

a record there is always the possibility of someone else breaking that
record. All material achievements are relative in nature. True
fulfillment

is possible only in Self-realization. While in bondage the aspirant
acts for
attaining fulfillment, after Self-realization he acts out of
fulfillment.

His actions will not bind him any more.

Even after realization physical dependence will be there as freedom at
this

level is not possible. One has to accept this and submit at this level,
like

for instance, obeying the traffic rules if one wants to drive on the
road.

But total freedom is possible at the mental and psychological levels
for the
realized person.

As long as man remains in bondage he has emotional dependence on
someone or

the other. The devotee instead transfers this dependence on God; a
realized

person who is totally Self- dependent. Hence a realized person acts in
total

freedom. (Saturday Dec. 05, 1998)

Providence cannot be thwarted

Fri, 4 Dec 1998 12:37:02 -0500

{{Human birth mainly occurs as a result of good deeds performed in
previous

births as a human, but being human both good and bad deeds are
inevitable

and hence joys and sorrows are intrinsic to it. Human nature is such that man will take the credit for himself when he is successful and denounce Providence for his lot when beset with problems forgetting the fact that he is reaping only the result of his earlier misdeeds}} (1).

The Almighty dispenses according to man's Karma and He is never partial.

Further, it must be borne in mind that the Lord never allows His devotees to suffer in life. When a person experiences sorrows he must be convinced that his suffering is due to his earlier misdeeds and instead of bemoaning his {{fate}} (2), his devotion must get further strengthened and he must continue to discharge his duties properly.

This truth is highlighted in the Sundara Kanda in the Ramayana in Sita's query about Rama when Hanuman found Her. She pointedly inquired about Rama's conduct in His sorrow due to their separation, "I hope Sri Rama does not feel afflicted... Does the ideal Man discharge His duties and does not feel helpless nor perplexed in the matter of duties? Does the Prince seek the favor of Gods? And does He fall back upon personal effort as well as on Providence for the success of His undertakings? I hope He has not sunk into despondency on meeting with great misfortunes."

It is said that till Hanuman located Sita he was intent on his mission, but after accomplishing the same and inspiring confidence in Her that Rama would soon rescue Her, he went about causing havoc in Ravana's capital so that Ravana would get an inkling of Rama's strength. When he was finally captured and brought before Ravana, it was at Vibhishana's insistence that it was unethical to kill an envoy, that his life was spared.

As a punishment his tail was set aflame and on learning about this from

the
ogresses, Sita protected his life by praying to the Lord of Fire, Agni,
and
Her power protected Hanuman and he escaped without any mishap. In
retaliation he set fire to the entire place excepting the grove where
Sita
was kept captive. After dousing the fire, he visited Sita once again
concerned whether his action would have affected Her and happy to find
Her
safe, took leave of Her after reassuring Her that She would be rescued
shortly.

The Sundara Kanda named after Hanuman is a testimony to his singular
traits
which is apparent from the very fact that he was entrusted with the
responsibility of finding Sita. The manner in which he went about to
accomplish this successfully, highlights his devotion to Rama and Sita.
(Friday, December 04, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) If one does not perform good deeds in the human life and does not
embark
on the spiritual mission to realize God, he gets in to the cycle of
birth
and deaths in lower forms of life. However, those who are already on a
spiritual path they are assured of human birth in order to complete
their
mission in next life provided they do not do any bad deeds.

(2) Fate is determined by one's actions. Result of those actions which
we
performed in the past and do not remember them (either due to a long
time
passed in this life or due to death in previous life) is known as fate.
It
is said that "Karmasheel" man can change his fate. Many did, Tulsi and
Surdasji were ordinary people engaged in worldly things but once they
passed
that stage, they became great saints only by their sheer determination
and
judicious use of the wisdom to find God. So as Valmiki -the notorious
robber/decoit and serial killer who became a great saint -the
"Adikavi" or

the "Brahma-rishi." All due to the mercy of his spiritual master, who is always impartial and whose blessings are priceless.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Human birth, not accidental

Thu, 3 Dec 1998 12:10:36 -0500

{{Human birth, not accidental}} (1)

Man evolves spiritually in the course of various human births and whatever merit he acquires by the performance of {{good deeds}} (2) is never in vain.

They may not bear fruit immediately but remain latent and fructify at an opportune time. Likewise, when one has progressed along the path of devotion and remembers God always, this natural tendency of the mind is retained and passed on from birth to birth.

The concept of Karma and rebirth are thus necessary to explain the natural propensities of man. The circumstances of birth, like for instance, the family in which one is born and the social environment in which one grows up, are determined by one's actions in previous births. This is the reason why some exhibit a very high level of spiritual evolution even in their young age. Sage Sukadev is a case in point.

Birth is thus not accidental and it ensures that the transmigrating soul is nurtured in the most ideal conditions conducive to its spiritual growth.

This does not negate the freedom of the individual if this should lead one to conclude that life is predetermined; man has the freedom to exercise his will in his actions. If his actions are righteous, then he does not incur sin.

It is said that the manner in which Bhagwat Purana was related to Pareekshit proved the king's spiritual stature. Though he was cursed to die in seven days time for insulting a sage, he had the great fortune of listening to the glory of the Lord during the brief period at his disposal. This was because of his parentage, being the grandson of the noble Pandavas who were great devotees and the grace of Lord Krishna which saved him even before he was born.

Spiritual tradition also emphasizes the importance of one's mental preoccupation at the moment of death. If through constant practice the mind dwells on the Lord then the soul is liberated. This may seem on the face of it quite easy. But, it is not so. Unless one is a steadfast devotee of God it is not possible to fix the mind on Him when the mind and the body are under great strain.

The Bhagavata Purana in one of the introductory chapters dilates on how Bhishma attained the supreme blissful state when he breathed his last in the presence of the Lord. As he awaited the auspicious hour when the sun turned north to shed his mortal coil, at the instance of Lord Krishna, he discoursed on various aspects of Dharma (righteousness) to Yudishtra. That he was aware of Krishna's divinity attests to his spiritual eminence when he identified Him as the Supreme Being while reciting the Vishnu Sahasranama.

(Thursday, December 03, 1998

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Human birth is certainly not accidental. It is by the grace of

God,
who out of His abundant mercy and feeling pity on suffering of Jeev
given
the human birth. In Ramayan it is said, "Kabhunk Kari Karunaa Nar
Dehee,
Det Ish Binu Hetu Sanehi;" means, "only sometime out of mercy God
gives
human birth without any of His interest, and due to love to give a
chance to
soul to liberate from the cycle of birth and death and be in the union
of
God. But, man soon forgets his goal and aim and wanders from one
thought/action to another and spends his whole life in worldly
perishable
things and accomplishments -such as a big house, a big car, a high
earning
job, a big bank balance, and then die in vain empty handed. Sometimes
by
his company and environment he strives to pray God and feels need for
God
realization. Thus what ever he does during human life determines what
birth
he will get. Usually at the end, what ever he thinks at the time of
his
death the soul transmigrate in that form. His thinking is determined
by his
actions -good or bad, throughout his life as a human. Thus the soul
with
its "sanskaars" laden on the "Antahkaran" and ego by wisdom takes
another
form in an environment conducive to full fill the results of his past
actions. In all lives, except human, the Jeev reaps the results of
bad
actions done in human life. Only in human life while he reaps the
results
of his past actions, he is also free to perform actions -good or bad
according to his wisdom. That is why human form is very important. No
other form of life has this freedom to act and by judicious use of this
freedom man can become free of the cycle of the birth and death. That
is
liberation, "Mukti" or "Moksha."

(2) The only good deeds are those which help us accomplishing our goal
to
realize God. All those actions which deter our efforts to know
ourselves or

know God are, therefore, bad or not good. Otherwise, nothing is good or bad, it is the thinking which make the same action bad or good depending upon the place and time. We know this from our worldly things also. Same thing at a time becomes good at one place and it is considered bad at other place, while at any one place, the same act is considered good at one time and bad at the other time. There can be several examples of it.

Therefore, one should strive for having virtues such as speaking truth, love for mankind, generosity, sincerity, honesty, piousness, kindness, Trust, service, humility, humbleness, etc. and shedding vices such as anger, greed, lust, zealously, lying, stealing, selfishness, pride, ego, aggressiveness, etc. Hopefully, then by the grace of God we can come in contact with saints and sages of Truth and grow spiritually.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Efficacy of chanting the Divine name

Wed, 2 Dec 1998 12:40:16 -0500

{{Chanting the Divine name has been hailed in the scriptures as the easiest method to realize God which can be practiced by one and all. While the other methods have certain prescriptions which must be observed, surrendering to God by chanting His name can be resorted to by anyone in any situation. In the spiritual tradition the efficacy of this method has been attested in the lives of many devotees}} (1).

Among the Divine names, Rama name has a unique status because it is both a

name of God and an incantation (mantra) by itself and hence is a Taraka mantra capable of delivering man from bondage. It is further the combination of the most important syllables in the Ashtakshara and Panchakshara mantras, and hence refers to the Supreme Being. {{The choice of this name by Sage Vasishtha for Rama is thus highly significant}} (2).

When Sita had almost decided to end Her life unable to bear the threats and reproaches of the ogresses guarding Her when She was kept in captivity in the Ashoka grove, it was Rama's name and glory which infused hope in Her heart and gave Her a fresh lease of life. Hanuman who had reached the spot where She had been held captive surmised after seeing her actions that She was totally demoralized and his astute mind considered the pros and cons of the manner in which he should act to ensure that his mission of locating Her would not be in vain.

Hanuman related Rama's glory and the incidents in His life till the point when he had been entrusted with the task of finding Her, hearing which She experienced great joy that Her plight would soon be over. He related various incidents in their lives to convince Sita about his identity and handed over Rama's signet ring to Her to win Her confidence.

Sita in return, by Her act of entrusting Her Choodamani, a jewel worn on the head, to Hanuman to be handed over to Rama, telling him that Rama would understand the significance of Her action, underscored the importance of total surrender to the Lord. She indicated by this act that She depended only on Her Lord and that He would come to Her succor.

{{Namaskara}} (3) is reiteration of one's submission for protection and faith in His grace and {{the Lord Himself has pointed out that He never

forsakes such a devotee in the Gita: "Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me. Doing so, you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me."} (4) It was with total faith that She waited for the Lord to come to Her rescue without making any effort on Her part to alleviate Her condition. (Wednesday, December 02,1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) In modern days "KaliYug" when man's life is short chanting God's Name or Word and meditating on His form is all which is required to start a spiritual life for revelation of God. There are many names of God but the ONE which is changeless, which was there in the beginning and is now and will remain in the end, that Word or Name of God must be chanted. That is a "Aghora Mantra" -the one which is not written or spoken aloud, the one which is chanted with every breath of life (the Jeev).

(2) Do you think that Guru Vashishtha will tell his disciple Rama to chant his own name "Rama"? Vashishtha gave to Rama the same Name which he himself was chanting or had chanted. Is it possible that everyone chant their own name? Then Krishna must have chanted 'Krishna-Krishna', or an individual by name "Chunnilal" should chant "Chunni -Chunni". And, what will be the consequences of it? Will it not make the individual full of ego, and will it not invite his own destruction, such as Harinyakshyapu did when he ordered Prahlada to enforce this rule?

(3) Namaskara -is a common salutation used by Indians. There may be several literary interpretation of this, but one simplest appears logical to mind is "Namah" (I) bow down or revere (to you) "Ish" (who is) God's "Akara" form;

or I bow down to you who looks like god. In Bible, it is said in genesis, "The God made the man in His own image." So as all scriptures indicate that the shape of man is same as of supreme form of (creation) existence or God.

(4) How much clearly one can say or write? Here the Lord is Krishna and the devotee is Arjuna. Therefore, we worship only one who is exceptionally dear to us. To God everybody is dear, but to a devotee only the God is dearest and nearest. When the devotee realizes God in himself then everybody becomes dear to him, just like to God everybody was dear. Notice the reason or means, to give our mind to Him, to be devoted to Him, to worship Him, is only Love, "Dear". Meera said, "Me To Liyo Govind Mol,; Ye To Aavat Prem Ke Mol." When Meera said she bought God, then people asked what price she paid, she replied "LOVE." Thus, Love, devotion and Service to God is the basis of God realization and spiritual awakening and knowledge.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Bondage, result of man's ignorance

Tue, 1 Dec 1998 12:38:19 -0500

{{Bondage, result of man's ignorance}} (1)

The scriptures have prescribed {{various methods}} (2) for man to realize the goal of liberation from bondage. The necessity for different methods is to enable everyone to progress spiritually as {{the level of spiritual evolution differs from person to person}} (3). {{The Bhagavad Gita teaches the paths of action, devotion and knowledge (Karma, Bhakti and Jnana yogas) as means to liberation}} (4).

The path of action stresses the importance of discharging one's duties in life underscoring the fact that spiritual life is not antithetical to secular life. When a person has made a beginning what is essential is a re-orientation of all actions to the ultimate goal. The same actions then instead of becoming binding enable one to overcome bondage. It helps in purifying the mind and to overcome base qualities like anger, jealousy and desires which impede spiritual progress.

Since the root cause of man's bondage is the ignorance of the true nature of his Self (Atman) only knowledge of the self can remove this ignorance and reveal his spiritual nature to him. That this stage is only a stepping-stone and one must graduate to the next when one has benefited from it, is pointed out in the Gita thus, "To the contemplative soul who desires to climb to the heights of Karma yoga, action with detachment is spoken of as the stepping-stone; for the same man when he is established in Yoga, absence of all thoughts of the world is said to be the way of blessedness."

Karma yoga is often compared to the womb of the mother which nurtures the growing fetus till it attains the necessary maturity to live independently. So also, when the aspirant had attained purity of mind and sense-control he must evolve to the next stage of Self-inquiry.

The path of action is one of extroversion when the aspirant has to engage in action till he masters the secret of acting with detachment; after this stage, the path of knowledge involves withdrawal because knowledge of the Self can be grasped only by introversion of the mind. In this stage which is one of contemplation, the spiritual aspirant has to meditate on the question "Who am I?" which in Vedanta is known as Self-inquiry.

This meditation leads to the discovery of one's Self. Thus knowledge is

the
result of the path of action. Without graduating to Self- inquiry the
path
of action is incomplete; and without practicing the path of action it
is not
possible to embark directly on the path of knowledge. (Tuesday,
December 01,
1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There is no bondage at all, due to ignorance the man thinks so. In
Ramayan it is said, "Jad Chetan Me Granthi Padi Gayee, Jadapi Mrathaa
Chhutath Kathinayee;" Means, the body (the dead earth) and the
spirit

or soul (the live or real thing) are tied together as a knot of life,
although it is false they are not tied together yet it is not easy to
untie

this knot." We see it in our daily lives that people die and the soul
and

body are separated, that is they are separable, so they can be
separated.

Once one has done it while living one has not to worry of death
anymore.

That is liberation. Some body said, "No Dware Kaa Pinjara, Taame
Panchhi

Pon; Rahane Ko Acharaj Hai, Gaye Achambhaa Kon." Means, "This human
body is

like a cage having none gates, all open, and there is a bird in it; the
surprise is that the bird is staying in it and there is no surprise if

it
leaves." Those who can take this bird out, for a fly out, by
determination,

meditation, and trance or "Samaadhi" are free of the cycle of life and
death.

(2) There are various methods but all of them have their different
reach and

all of them do not take man to realize the supreme goal. The goal of
liberation from the bondage can be achieved by more than one method but
the

supreme goal of service to God can not be accomplished without Love and
Devotion. Thus, there is only one method, i.e., the method or path of

Love

an Devotion "Bhakti Yoga" and none else to reach God.

(3) The level of spiritual interest does differ from person to person but all people do have the same spirit or self or God in them. The difference is being due to the number of layers of illusion and attachments they have put over it, hence making them appear different in spiritual evolution.

(4) The Gita also says of Raj Yoga, Sankhaya Yoga, Sanyaas Yoga, etc. but the Karma, Bhakti and Gyan Yogas are the main ones and among these three also the Bhakti Yoga is supreme. Actually, these all are named different but in reality even Karma and Gyan Yogas are also parts of Bhakti Yoga.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Preceptors show path to God's empire

Mon, 30 Nov 1998 12:09:37 -0500

{{Preceptors show path to God's empire}} (1)

God will never swerve from the firm declaration made by Him on two important occasions that He is ever ready to grant protection to anyone who seeks it from Him. There is no need to verify whether His this commitment will be honoured. It is not an empty promise but has come out of His concern for the humanity in turmoil. How to invoke the grace of the Lord and become eligible for His mercy has been laid down by savants in a recipe that is simple but gives an open expression to the penitents' surrender at His feet. A devotee talks with His Lord, "Do not forsake me, as I am helpless. You have the powers to take me into your fold which I do not possess. You have abundant

knowledge which I am denied. Grant me both as you are aware of my sincerity"

God's messengers, who are deputed to guide the aspirants, have, through their works and elucidations, cleared the latter's doubts in respect of some statements which may apparently seem to be confusing. The saints' clarifications have set at rest all such portions which were misleading. God Himself had taken the roles of a teacher and a student, as an example and, to enable people to follow the right path.

The greatest emphasis they have laid in their treatises is about the relationship between the Lord and a devotee, the obstacles in the way of approaching Him and the validity of the doctrine of surrender. They have described the modes of observing the three types of procedures while pleading one's viability to resort to the path of devotion and hence to grant asylum as promised. The Acharyas have shown us the royal road to reach God's empire and it is for the suffering souls to avail of this benefit and get permanently released from the bondage. (Monday, November 30, 1998)

***** | COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) True. Jesus Christ said in Bible, "No one can go to my father unless thorough me." History tells us that who so ever has seen God's empire has repeatedly told it loud and clear that only a preceptor can show us the path to God's empire. Kabir, Nanak, Rama, Krishna, Meera Paltu, Raidas, Valmiki, etc. all of them, have said the same ONE thing. Ramayan and Gita reiterate the same thing again and again. Mohammed would not have got the revelation had there not been Gabriel, so as Shabari without Mratanga, Sukhdev without Vyasji, Rama without Vashishtha, Arjuna without Krishna, Kabir without Ramanandji, Nanak without Kabir, Ramakrishnaji without Totapuriji, etc.

Actually Ramayan says, "Guru Binu Bhav Nidhi Tarai Na Koi; Jo Biranchi Shankar Sam Hoi." Means, "without Guru no one can get free from the cycle of death and birth even if they are like the Brahma and Shiva." It is well known that even Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva also were initiated by their preceptors before they knew the realms of God. It is said, "Hari, Biranchi Shiva Dikshaa Lina, Narad Dheemar Ko Guru Kinaa." Means, "Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva were initiated and Narad made Dheemer as his Guru." Thus it's established well beyond any doubt that only a bonafide preceptor who has walked himself on that path, who knows the kingdom of God, can and does show us the path to God's empire. Therefore, seekers of God or spirituality must first seek a preceptor, else all the efforts to know God goes in vain. It is almost impossible to be born without parents, or to have cow's milk without a cow, or to have knowledge without a teacher. Clearly it is said, "Bin Guru Gyan Kahan Se Paau, Deejo Daan Hari Gun Gaau." Means, "Where do I get the knowledge without a preceptor, please bless me so that I can sing the glory of God." My master has so very kindly mercifully given me the blessing that I can utter the glory of God, His glory, else this tongue was there before also. These hands were there before also, doing no good for the very soul which kept them moving. Therefore, one must seek a preceptor at any cost. It is said, "Ye Tan Vish Kee Belari, Guru Amrit Kee Khaan; Sheesh Diye Jo Guru Mile To Bhi Sastaa Jaan." Means, "This body is the wine of lots of poison and the Preceptor takes us beyond death, therefore, even if we find a preceptor at the cost of our head or death it is a good bargain." What are you waiting for, my friend? Wake up, arise, go to a preceptor who knows Him. You want to talk with God, clearly it is said, "Jo Kaam Davaa Bhee Kar Na Sake, Vo Kaam Duaa Se Hotaa Hai; Jab Murshid Kaamil

Miltaa Hai, To Baat Khuda Se Hotaa Hai." Thus without Him He is not known.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Mother's supreme love for children

Fri, 27 Nov 1998 19:43:32 -0500

In the traditional method of imparting knowledge to students, the Vedas have given valuable guidelines about their behavior in the future. At the time of leaving the portals of their institutions, a reference used to be made by the teachers during the valedictory address to the verse from one of the Upanishads containing an extremely useful advice viz., they should revere their mothers, respect their fathers, honor their teachers and welcome guests (in that order). The prime position has thus been assigned to the mother because of the sacrifice she makes for which there is no parallel. She is responsible to train her children and shape their future. All the scriptures have described the role they play and the obedience to be shown to them.

A story is told of a mother, who brought up her son with care, herself going through difficulties. But he fell into the net spread by bad company and took to evil habits like stealing and addiction. Once there was a wager whether he could fetch his mother's heart. The ungrateful boy did not hesitate to obtain it (by killing her) and as he was carrying it in his hands, he stumbled and fell. Even then, the "heart", with all love, asked him whether he was injured. This illustrates a mother's supreme love for her wards. Even an ascetic, before whom all prostrate, will bow before his mother.

It is important that {{the education must be given for women as in their hands lies the future of the country by ensuring that their children developed discipline and studied properly}} (1). The Vaishnava tradition emphasized on the twin objectives of acquiring knowledge and putting into practice what people have learnt. They should not forget what they had studied because learning is a continuous process. In this connection education is essential for all

but the knowledge they had gained should remain indelible.

The first emphasis is on dealing with "learning," is the duty relating to one's conduct and to one's knowledge, which translated into practice, becomes culture. The couplet says: {"Acquire a sound knowledge of things which should be learnt and then act accordingly."} (2) Our scriptures have given importance to women's role as they are the custodians of our heritage and makers of future citizens. For a teacher, there is no other happiness than to see the affection showered on him by his students, particularly not forgetting him when they occupy different positions in life. The teacher, on his part, has the intuition to spot the latent talent among his students. (Friday, November 27, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Nehru, one of the Indian past prime minister, used to say, "If you educate a man you educate only one person, but if you educate a woman you educate the whole family." It is true, women bear children, what they hear their children pick up in a subtle way, what they eat, drink, or smoke affects their children. The example of Abhimanyu, who learnt to enter in to the chakravyuh while he was in his mother's womb, is not unfamiliar to many of us. There are many other examples, such as Prahlad, etc. Then children spend most of their time with their mothers specially first few years, and thereafter also, until they marry. Women's education is most important not only because they are mothers, but also because they become wives first, who influences their husbands. They can make or break a family. They are instrumental in creating an environment where they and other members of their family live. This environment eventually affects their own children (when they become parents) and imparts them "sanskars" or conduct, values, etc. Most importantly, the question arises, how do we define education? Is it literacy like B. A., M. A., Ph. D., M. D., J. D., Noble Laureate, etc. with which some people can become church pastors, college professors, or presidents or heads of the countries? It is well known that such highly educated and well placed people have been convicted in many scandals, some even have been sentenced to prison. Obviously, that education will not make a woman a good mother, a good wife. The right education must inculcate habit of always speaking truth, being

honest, being kind, forgiving, loving people and not material objects, being respectful to people, caring people, not being zealous, having good moral character, be free from lust, greed, anger, pride, ego, etc. Only people with this kind of education can give a person better family values, and more so better human values. Only such education can motivate a person to know the Truth, and be spiritually awakened..

(2) Acquiring sound knowledge of things is important but equally important is to follow it or act accordingly. However, if these things are all material things then it would do no good, as matter has no existence without the spirit. It is perishable and always changeable. Acquiring this material knowledge will only enable us to draw more matter, more material wealth, more food, bigger houses and cars, etc. but it can never give us the eternal happiness and bliss. Hence, a person must acquire the real knowledge, the spiritual knowledge, the everlasting knowledge, which is not perishable with the death of this body, and which only grows until it culminates and merge in God. This spiritual knowledge can only be obtained from those who have it. An earnest, sincere request with a guileless heart and strong will power to know God is all that is required in seekers of spiritual knowledge, or God.

Obtaining this knowledge do no good to us in this life until we practice it and act accordingly. Yoga and spiritual knowledge are not a thing to read or write, it ought to be done, practiced, before we can see any of its result in terms of knowing the Truth, the Lord, God or spirit. Fortunately, it's all within our reach, because the earth is never devoid of a spiritual master or "Brahma-rishi" at any one time. Every soul is a seeker of God at different stages of "Saadhanaa" and they meet each other, thus the same "Jeev-atma" becomes "Maha-atma" and on to "Param-atma" at some or the other time. When we are ready and eager, we leave no stone unturned in finding God. He is so close to us, all we need is someone who can show us where and how. If we humans can not find Him, perhaps no one else can. Many great souls have found Him so as we can.

With best wishes
Sincerely
Ds

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Moral law should not be contravened

Thu, 26 Nov 1998 17:08:16 -0500

The present-day ills in the world can be attributed to the neglect of spiritual values which has resulted in lack of character and discipline among people in general. To experience all-round peace, people should follow the code of conduct laid down in scriptures. Moral laws should never be contravened and the wise guidelines contained in sacred texts ought to be adopted in life by everyone. These directives, when followed, would enable a person to develop humility, good conduct to steer himself properly in the family and the society.

Both the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, give instructions for every individual to shape his future and behave in an ideal manner. There is no bar on anyone earning money or enjoying comforts but he should not turn avaricious. Also, it is absolutely necessary for every aspirant (in any field) to put forth his efforts to the maximum extent and seek God's grace for realizing the objective before him. Both personal endeavor and the Divine grace will fetch prosperity. God, who is not partial, extends His guidance to those who are devoted to Him.

Apart from the morals projected in the Mahabharata, even the extraordinary technical expertise of the people of ancient days can be seen by the way in which a huge edifice was erected with several innovations and contrivances. Even within this palatial building, arrangement was made for one to see water actually flowing and even hear its gurgling sound. But one could apparently walk over its surface. However such remarkable, rare intriguing provisions resulted in the commencement of family feud. Duryodhana, who attended the special "Yagya" performed by Yudhishtira, could not realize about the intricate architectural splendor in this building and so faltered while taking his steps. This provoked laughter in the queen who also made some unsavory remarks. Provoked by the humiliation, Duryodhana vowed to take revenge. The seed was thus sown for the future rivalry among the cousins. He also wanted to erect a similar mansion. His desire grew into greed and a scheme was hatched to invite the eldest among the cousins for a

game of dice, knowing his weakness for this play. The adviser, Vidura, was sent to fetch the noble man. It is said, Vidura felt that there was more in this invitation than what met the eye. Ultimately, Yudhishtira lost everything that was staked and with his brothers and wife went to the forest. The epic focuses the attention of everyone about {{the disastrous consequences of gambling and the need to avoid yielding to its temptation}} (1). It is also necessary to avoid passing harsh comments about others. (Thursday, November 26, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One needs to avoid yielding to the temptations of mind and ten senses. Else it will be a big gambling with the life. We have got this life due to the blessings of God and we can not afford to lose it by taking a chance (such as in gambling). God realization is only possible when one has control over his mind, which controls all the senses. Once our mind becomes still and it does not jump from one thought to another we can see the image of God in us clearly. That is why people like lonely places, free of noise, in not too hot or too cold environment, to meditate. We know it from our simple daily experiences also that as long as we keep making ripples, waves or currents in the water by stirring it or shaking the pot we can not see the image of sun or moon in it. That does not mean that there is no sun or moon out there. But once we make the pot of water still and stop even minute winds which may make ripples and waves in it we can see the same sun or moon's image in it. We can calm the mind by constant practice under the guidance of some one who has calmed down his own mind. This is the worldly death of a seeker of God and the birth of a spiritual aspirant of God then ensues. With this all attachment with world ceases and love for God develops which only results in His vision.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Six real, unfailing relations of man

Wed, 25 Nov 1998 11:32:32 -0500

There are six "real, unailing" relations of man, viz., Truth, Wisdom, Righteousness, Compassion, Peace and Forgiveness. Every individual has it, the entire humanity has also one and it is "Truth". It is synonymous to Mother. Those who follow this universal mother, will never face problems in life. She remains unchanged in all periods of time and transcends all the three attributes, viz., purity, attachment and inertia. "Wisdom" is the true father, "virtue", the brother. It (virtue) is loved by the entire humanity irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. The Vedas give utmost importance to Truth and Righteousness. In the Ramayana, when Lakshmana, who personified virtue, fainted, Rama lamented that it was difficult to get a brother like him.

Compassion is the "true" friend. While "peace" is described as wife by the Sanskrit verse which has spelt out the six true relations, it (peace) is the royal path in the spiritual realm. A "true" son is forgiveness, which encompasses all good qualities. The world experiences agitation and disturbance because of lack of these sacred traits. Sages and saints had undertaken many spiritual practices in quest of "Truth". They ultimately had its vision in the form of God. The Vedas proclaim "Speak the Truth and uphold virtues". Once people stood by Truth, they will find "Divinity" everywhere. A person who possesses qualities like anger, hatred and jealousy can only be called a beast. In his heart, God will decline to reside. A person's happiness is heaven and his misery is hell. The concepts of hell and heaven have been introduced in order to see that one carries out only pious deeds. Scriptures point out that the cause of grief is in one's own mind and actions.

A saint (whose birthday fell two days ago) referred to the penance undertaken by the Buddha for six years. One day, he opened his eyes and said he had caught hold of the thief. Who was this culprit? He was none else than the "Mind." Realizing that mind was the root cause of all suffering, he asked people to keep it under control, then there would be no problems. Human heart can be compared to the Ocean of Milk but today it has become an ocean of salinity. {{The heart should be kept pure}} (1) so that Lord Vishnu can reside therein. If it is made a place of impure thoughts (like the ocean of salinity) only whales and sharks would dwell in it. If a person realizes that God is "within" him, he will not search for Him outside. "God is with you, in you, and around you. There is no one nearer to you than God, like a mother, worship Him as your mother." (Wednesday, November 25, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) This is not the heart which pumps blood through our body. That is just a muscle full of flesh and blood. This is the spiritual heart, which is the very seat of God. He is Brahma, He is Vishnu, He is Mahesh or Shiva, He is the "Sakshaat" real face to face God beyond all gods, He is the supreme God, I bow down to such a God with all the eight parts of my body. Such a God resides in me and I can see Him when I turn myself inwardly. He is so close to me, undoubtedly, I am because of Him, I am nothing and He is everything -the Lord of all Lords.

Only ceaseless remembrance of this God will purify this heart. Once with a guileless heart I pray Lord and forget the rest of the world, then I see God in the whole world. Where is He not? God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Only knowing God's Word and meditating on Him will enable a person to have spiritual enlightenment. That is a promise. It is made by all those who had His vision.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Greatness of the votaries of the Lord

Tue, 24 Nov 1998 12:13:53 -0500

Can anyone be sure that when he is in distress, he will get spontaneous help from even intimate friends or close relatives? No doubt, it will be unwise and improper to think of such timely assistance because they may be guided by factors like time to spare or proximity or resources to spend. But there is one "Totally dependable" but invisible "Source" from which any type of assistance, at any moment and at any place will be extended. He is God who is not governed by the Law of Time and Space and who is ever ready to

relieve His devotees' grief.

Such devotees should firmly hold on to His feet and wholly depend on Him.

How to cultivate this attitude of remaining firm in one's faith has been

mentioned in holy texts. Apart from resorting to the prescribed religious

duties, one can take to {{constant chanting of God's names and get associated with pious people}} (1). "I pay my obeisance to these holy men,

the mines of all virtues," says Tulasidas as "they are stainless and are

free from attachment and they will assuage the afflictions of those who take

resort to them with reverence". {{Contact with noble souls is the root of

joy and blessings and constitutes the fulfillment of all endeavors, adds the

saint-poet}} (1). The declaration by the Lord Himself contained in the Bhagavatham "I am the beloved of all My devotees and am subject to

their control," brings hope, cheer and confidence to those who pin their faith in

Him. God adds that pious souls who have fastened their hearts on to Him enthrall Him.

Asceticism and worship offered are conducive to the highest good, to those

endowed with humility and other virtues. However, in the case of a doer who

lacks modesty, those very practices will prove harmful. An emperor, with

inexhaustible store of wealth and unequalled power, regarded all of them as

equal in value to objects seen in a dream. But he remained detached and fixed his mind on God and was an embodiment of sincerity, simplicity

and utter humility. Once he observed a vow of monthly fasting but at a particular stage was caught in a dilemma whether to end it before a

fixed time or wait till the sage who had come to him returned from his

religious observances. Consulting {{holy men}} (2), he resorted to the former

step which enraged {{the saint who created an evil spirit to destroy the

emperor.
But the Holy Discus which was guarding the emperor, chased the saint
for his
misdeed and ultimately on the advice of the Lord, he sought pardon from
the
devotee}} (3). (Tuesday, November 24, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One can not chant God's Name until one meets a pious person, a
noble
soul, a saint or satguru. He alone knows Him and His Name and can tell
us
what is that Name to chant. Therefore, association with pious people
is
most important. Contact and company with a saint or saints is not only
the
root of all joys and blessings but it is the seed of it, and the self
realization or vision of God is only possible through the Guru. Only
He can
lead us from the darkness of ignorance to the light of wisdom. That is
why
they call him Guru.

A point to note here is that although God's names can be many but since
God
is ONE His name is also ONE and ONLY ONE. Once we know that Name then
only
we can chant it, remember it. If we do not know God how can we remember
Him
or His Name. Yes, we can mechanically chant with our tongue a name or
any
name but not God's Name.

In this universe every physical object has a name and form. These are
two
separate terms but these are integrally attached and related terms.
When we
see a cup, actually we are seeing the shape or form of a cup and we
call
it's name "cup". Because, we named that form or shaped object as cup.
Similarly, when we say its name "cup" the shape or the form of the
object
named cup comes to mind. Thus, name can not be without form or shape

or
object, and the object can not be without a name.

Hence, suspicious mind people speak as "if there is a God it must have
a
name and form". If we call His Name as God it must have a form or
shape.

Such people merely believe that there is a God. But spiritually
awakened
people not only believe that there is a God they also know Him and then
believe. The danger in just believing is that we can disbelieve also
because
our believe is baseless, without any base. But if we believe after
knowing
God no power on the earth can shake our believe and we will not falter
in
praising the Lord.

(2) Holy men! Who are they? How do we define a holy men? Only those who
have
seen God, who know God and who can show you God are Holy men. They
will
give their everything, even their spirit, for your gain in knowing God.
Holy men are not necessarily people who hold high religious offices,
such as
Vatican, or one of the "Peeths" of Shankaracharya, etc., they do not
necessarily wear a particular robe or dress or wear beard, or hair;
they are
not necessarily highly educated or read scriptural books regularly or
even
remember them by heart. They speak truth, what they write or speak
becomes
the scriptures. A holy man is beyond the three states, -awakened,
dream, and
deep sleep, of "jeev" in "Turiyaa" or trance state, which is a balance
to
nullify the effects of all three. Similarly, He is beyond three
"gunas"
-"Sat, Raj, and Tam." The entire universe is termed as "Prakrati" or
nature
which emanates from one or more of these three gunas. A Holy man is
beyond
prakrati. He knows the Purush, the God.

(3) Was he a saint who created an evil spirit to destroy the emperor?
Do

saint do misdeeds? Are there Holy Discus? Saints do not do any misdeeds. Those who do are not saints. They have any or all those powers, -evil spirit, or Holy Discus, which God has but they do not misuse it. They only make good use of it for the welfare of their devotees. Hence, it is said, "Hari Ruthe Guru Sharan Hai, Guru Ruthe Nahin Thorh," means, "If the God is not happy you can go to Guru, but if the Guru is unhappy you can go nowhere, not even God. Tulsidasji said it beautifully in UttarKand of Ramayan, "More Man Prabhu As Bisbaasaa, Raam Se Adhik Raam Kar Daasaa; Raam Sindhu Ghan Sajjan Dheera, Chandan Taru Hari Sant Sameera." Means, "I believe firmly that the servant of God is more than the God; if the Raam is ocean than saints are clouds taking the clean water from it (leaving all the solids and salts behind) and giving us pure drinking water, if the God is sandal wood (a source of fragrance) the saints are the wind to bring its fragrance to us so that to enable us to smell it."

Therefore, we must first seek a saint who can show us the path, the way to God. The path of love, devotion and service is the proven, simple and easy to follow to know God, the spirit.

With best wishes
Sincerely
Ds

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Man must actualize his divine nature

Mon, 23 Nov 1998 15:55:30 -0500

{{Man is different from the other forms of life in that he alone is endowed with the faculty of discrimination which must be applied to good purpose. But if one misuses this power for selfish ends or leads a life of excess by succumbing to one's baser instincts and desires then the very purpose

of human birth is defeated. There is every possibility of being reborn in the next birth not as a human being but in lower orders of life}} (1).

This reveals that the course of evolution of the bonded soul need not always be in the ascending order and it is one's deeds - good and bad - which determine birth. The very fact that one has been blessed with human birth should make one responsible and utilize it for realizing higher ends.

Since man lives in a society his actions affect others also which is the reason that social and moral codes have been evolved in the interest of both the individual and the society. So it becomes apparent that one cannot pursue one's interest to the detriment of others in society. The values that have to be nurtured to ensure the welfare of all, besides creating a healthy society promote the spiritual growth of the individual who follows them.

It is not one's status, birth, affluence or other worldly attainments which make a person noble but his humane qualities. If Rama's name has become immortal, it is not out of adulation as He was the incarnation of the Supreme Being, but due to the fact of His singular qualities of head and heart. The Lord in this incarnation set an example for man about how he should conduct himself in life.

It is said that the Lord deigned to be born as a human being in order that man could ascend to the level of the Divine. The Supreme Being incarnated as the son of Dasaratha with one of the specific purpose, which was to destroy Ravana who had with his tyrannical ways let loose a reign of terror. Though it was an act of grace of the Lord towards humanity, the choice of His parents was due to the noble qualities of Dasaratha and Kausalya.

In answer to Kausalya's prayer the Lord Himself took birth as her son and

{{the Ramayana which depicts His life is hailed as the Vedas itself}}
(2).
The first syllable of every thousandth verse in the Ramayana which has
24000
verses, begins with the successive syllables of the Gayatri mantra
which has
24 syllables. The opening verse which is in the form of a question
raised by
Valmiki to Narada about who embodied in him all the virtues, highlights
the
purpose of the Lord's incarnation as a human being. (Monday, November
23,
1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Man is not an animal, or any other form of life. He has all animal
instincts, senses and physical body organs like animals do, but only
man has
intellect, wisdom and ego. Only due to these important qualities man
is
FREE to do Karma -good or bad, as determined by his intellect and
wisdom.
At the same time, even man is also bound to bear the fruits of his past
Karma. All the rest lives are compelled to do those actions which they
do
because they are dictated by their past Karma during one or more of the
past
life as man. These lives are not free to do Karma. Hence, if a man
does
good Karma he will get a "Devayoni" -a higher bonded life form; and if
he
does bad Karma he will get "PashuYoni" -an animal bonded life form.
Only
man through his intellect and wisdom can choose to know God, learn
about Him
(the spiritual knowledge), realize his own self, and lit the fire of
wisdom
in himself so that he can burn all his Karma in it and be free of
rebirth.
Alternatively, if he can not do that easily, he can offer (throw) all
his
Karma in some body's burning fire of wisdom and still get the same
result.

That is what Krishna told to Arjuna in Gita, "Do your duty and offer all your Karma to me. Do not expect the result of your Karma, else you will not be even able to perform your duty perfectly."

(2) The Ramayan -the human body; to know God in this human body, in this life itself, is the fulfillment of one's aim or goal in life. Veda, means to know. To know what? The God. While we are living if we can know God then we have accomplished our goal. Of course, as is usually known, Ramayan, Gita, and Vedas, are scriptural books also written and commented by many authors.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO KNOW THE LORD IN THIS LIFE ITSELF (While we can. Dead man can't). Death is not the solution of problem in knowing God and it is not the end of the soul's journey either. Yes, it does mark the end of the form, the body. When the end of the "Sva" (means, I, self) is accomplished the real peace and bliss follows, as said, "Svaantaaya Sukhaaya.

With best wishes
Sincerely

Ds ++++++

Cultivate devotion

Sat, 21 Nov 1998 17:20:02 -0500

{{Cultivate devotion from young age}} (1)

The Vedas were revealed for the welfare of mankind and though they contain all the necessary guidelines for leading a righteous life, the Lord has out of compassion incarnated from time to time to re-establish righteousness, whenever there has been a decadence to protect the pious and destroy the wicked. Of them, His manifestation as Krishna assumes great significance as this incarnation is hailed as a complete manifestation of the Supreme Being.

The Bhagavata Purana and the Mahabharata which contains the Bhagavad Gita, both written by Veda Vyasa, recount His glorious deeds in this incarnation. The Gita which is the teaching of Lord Krishna to Arjuna

is hailed as the very essence of the Upanishads. A doubt may arise {{why the Lord taught this to Arjuna and not to the other Pandavas and the reason for elucidating spiritual knowledge in the battlefield.

Arjuna represents the ideal human being to whom the scriptural teachings are intended and the battlefield is akin to worldly life. Contrary to the common notion that the spiritual goal is antithetical to worldly life and that it is meant for a few, it is the birthright of every human being and human birth is an opportunity given to realize this end.

The Lord's teachings in the Gita are intended for the entire humanity. The majority of people cannot retire from worldly life to pursue the spiritual goal and thus it becomes imperative that one has to start this quest and do all that is essential to progress spiritually amid worldly pre-occupations }} (2).

The Bhagavata Purana underscored {{the fact that one cannot afford to postpone spiritual quest in life. King Pareekshit retired to the forest with the intention of listening to the Lord's glories from the sages when he was cursed to die. The situation in the Purana for relating the Lord's glory - that of impending death - portrays the reality of the human situation.

Life is ephemeral and one has to make the best of every moment granted to one to realize the spiritual goal. Though one confronts death in day-to-day life, it is ironical that one does not relate oneself to its certitude and in the process the spiritual quest is postponed to the last stage of life. The Yakshaprasna in the Mahabharata posits this paradox as the greatest of all wonders.

Great devotees have pointed out that one must cultivate devotion early in life and chant His names and glory always as it is not possible to remember the Lord when the end is near}} (1). The Gita reiterates the same idea and that a devotee must remember Him in all his undertakings. (Saturday, November 21, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There is no young age or old age. The age is of the body. The spirit is ageless, it does neither die nor is born. Therefore, the "jeev" remembers Lord's Word from day one of the conception but at and after birth gets confused due to illusion. It starts leaving remembering Lord's Word and attachment with the worldly things,

relations, and material, physical, perishable world starts building and strengthening. This keeps going until his eagerness to know his own self, the Truth, his own identity (who he is? whether he is body or spirit?) grows, gradually intensifies and he yearns for knowing the Truth. Then by the blessing of God he finds some one -a neighbor, a school or college friend, a coworker, a fellow passenger in the train, airplane or bus etc., one of the parent, relative, or anyone, who has had such yearning and who has found someone higher up in the ladder, a free God realized person. If he can confide, trust and develop devotion in this person to satisfy his yearnings and fulfill his aim and purpose of getting this human life, then he realizes that establishment of his goal to know the Truth and God is the only right thing; and with the ceaseless blessings of this person -call him Guru, Satguru, Guide, Adviser, God, the father, the mother, the brother, the friend, the true knowledge, the true wealth, the deity of all deities, the true thing in everything, its accomplishment appears near. There is no age for this. The earlier the better. Dhruva has realized at 6 years age, the Prahlad at 15 years, while Pareekshit towards the end of his life close to death. But postponement of this mission will only keep him from obtaining the Truth, the knowledge and bliss.

(2) There are billions of people in this world, while everyone of them has a birth right to know their own self, the Truth, only a few select know it. The reason is simple, they all are at different levels of zeal to know the Truth. If the Truth is told to everyone, first, everyone can not understand it due to their different environment and ability; second, if the recipient is not ready to receive it, it also goes unused unless the donor has an infinite capacity. It is well known that experienced farmer only sow seeds in well tilled, fertile soil. If the soil is not prepared well it further becomes harder and harder to prepare and also loses its capacity to receive seeds and grow. Hence, Krishna did not tell anyone else but told only to Arjuna who asked with all humility, sincerity and an honest zeal to know the best, the Truth, the God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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The Self, eternal in nature

Fri, 20 Nov 1998 14:31:14 -0500

{{The Self, eternal in nature}} (1)

{{Man's true nature is blissful}} (2) but it is not always reflected in his worldly interactions as he experiences sorrows also. To understand the reason for this requires an appreciation of his make-up. Generally a person identifies himself with the body-mind-intellect and the spiritual Self gets relegated to the background. This is due to ignorance which in turn results in misapprehension of the reality.

An analysis of the states of human awareness shows that there is an underlying consciousness which functions through all {{the three states of waking, dream and sleep}} (3). The experience that one slept well, about which one becomes aware after waking up, will not be possible if there is no underlying consciousness. Further, it becomes apparent from this same experience that consciousness cannot be the quality of the mind, as the mind which ceases to function in the state of sleep, registers the fact of sleeping peacefully after getting up. So it becomes clear that the locus of consciousness is the Self (Atman) which is eternal and blissful.

From this it is clear that man's sorrows are due to ignorance of his true spiritual nature. The sense of identification, the feeling of "I" is always related to the body-mind-intellect personality. Only a realized person who gets an insight into his true spiritual nature is able to overcome ignorance and the sense of ego.

It is said that Lord Krishna taught this important truth right at the outset in the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna threw down his arms refusing to fight just when the war was about to commence after beholding his kith and kin, as he felt that he would be responsible for their death in the battle. To remove his ignorance the Lord pointed out to him that the Self (Atman) was indestructible and never ceased to be.

The body is subject to the flux of time as it undergoes the changes of childhood, youth and old age and eventual death. A wise person who observes this fact does not grieve over death. Since the Self is eternal, when the body ceases to be it has to be reborn till it is liberated from transmigration.

From the ultimate standpoint every being is characterized by {{five aspects - existence, knowledge and enjoyment of objects and also name and form}} (4). When name and form which are the characteristics of the body cease, it does so only in that particular form and hence it has to acquire another name and form. This explains the existential realities of birth and death as corollaries of creation. {{This truth can be realized only through spiritual knowledge}} 5). (Friday, November 20, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The self, soul, spirit, God, Truth are all names of ONE reality, which is not destroyed, rather which does not change with time; actually which is beyond Time "Kaal" hence it is immortal, eternal, without the beginning and end.

(2) This is the true nature of man. Man is not a body, he is a soul, a spirit. When man realizes this he dwells in a state of bliss -the state of eternal joy, or happiness, the never ending happiness. That is why self realization is so important and essential because without it man can not get lasting peace and happiness -the bliss.

(3) In each of these states the spirit lies in the human body at

different places in the body itself. In sleep it lies closest to God or Brahma, hence we relishes the most and feel good and fresh, although sleep is due to "Tamo-gun", as against "Rajo-gun" in dream and "Sato-gun" in awakened state.

The origin of life itself is due to "Tamo-gun" -the science document it that the darkness and moisture are two essential ingredients for formation of life. All inquisitive and anxious students of spiritual knowledge want to be away from all these three "gunas" and three states of life in order to realize God, because God is beyond these gunas and states.

(4) The existence "Sat", knowledge "Chit", and enjoyment "Anand" or bliss, are three meta-physical aspects of a human being, where as the name and form are the physical aspects. Name is given to a body which has a form. Thus when the form is seen the name is remembered and uttering name the form comes to mind. Such as calling a cup the shape of the cup is visualized and seeing the shape or form of a cup its name is remembered. The spirit is beyond these five aspects and it is due to spirit that a human being has these five aspects. The spirit embodies a form, a name and is "Sat, Chit, Anand."

(5) True. Therefore, the bliss -the everlasting happiness, is accomplished only through the spiritual knowledge. This Truth can be realized only when we develop a zeal in us to meet a bonafide spiritual master. It is just like we experience about America only after we come here and visit this place. No amount of description or reading books and books about America can give us that experience. It is well known that "A picture is worth thousand words and a field visit is worth thousands of pictures." Actually, one can

not possibly take all the pictures of the nature, in spite of having many films available to him, of what all one can see out in the nature. Had it been so, everybody would have just got books and pictures and nature would not exist at all. God does exist, only those can see who have been out there in His vicinity, no amount of reading scriptures and talking or listening sermons can help. The only help this all can do is to awake a sleeping giant.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Dedicate all actions to the Lord

Wed, 18 Nov 1998 11:55:18 -0500

The path of action (Karma yoga) prescribed in the Bhagavad Gita can be practiced at three levels. The first approach is based on the fact that man cannot refrain from action and hence it is desirable to follow the scriptural guidelines so that he does not deviate from righteous conduct in going about his daily life. Hence it can be adopted as God's teaching when He incarnated as Krishna.

The second approach would be to consider the path of action as worship of God with the understanding that it is obligatory to discharge one's duties in life and thus utilize this method to evolve spiritually. This attitude enables one to lead a holistic life thereby spirituous mundane actions. Lord Krishna after touching on these two aspects then points out the third angle - the spiritual aspect to Karma yoga.

This dimension can be appreciated and followed only by {{a seeker of liberation (Moksha)}} (1). Since knowledge of the Self alone can dispel

ignorance which is the cause of bondage, the path of action in the case of one who practices it as a means to Moksha, helps in purifying the mind of its baser qualities like desires, anger, jealousy, greed etc. Only a mind which is rid of these tendencies can intuit the nature of the Self. The relevance of purificatory rites (Samskaras) prescribed in the scriptures can be appreciated from this. They are intended to purify the mind.

Thus the path of action enables one to graduate to the path of knowledge (Jnana yoga). Though worldly success is measured in terms of material prosperity and Karma yoga is capable of giving both material and spiritual benefits, a spiritual aspirant is not interested in material ends and pursues it only with the intention of realizing the higher end. The seeker of liberation might derive material benefit also in the process, but he remained unaffected by it, conscious always about his primary goal.

It is said in the spiritual tradition while comparing the efficacy of the different means to liberation, that there is no failure in the practice of Karma yoga. Whether there is material reward or not, the practitioner certainly derives spiritual benefit.

Lord Krishna also points out in this context that when man accepts the fruit of his actions as God's grace (prasada) he is absolved of all sins. When anything is enjoyed in life as one's due it becomes binding, but when the same is accepted after consecrating it to God, it will not result in further bondage. (Wednesday, November 18, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Wise men who seek service to God with Love and Devotion do not

care for liberation. The liberation is assured in devotion without even expectation. In Ramayan it is said, "Ram Bhajat Soee Mukuti Gosaaeen, Anaichhit Aavat Bariaaee; Jimi Thal Binu Jal Rahi Na Sakaaee, Koti Bhaateen Kou Kare Upaaee." Means, "With remembering God the liberation follows without having any desire for; just like without earth water can not remain, even if one can try million ways." Also it further says, "Tatha Mochha Sukh Sunu Khagaraaee, Rahi Na Sakai Hari Bhagati Bihaaee; As Bichaaree Hari Bhagat Sayaane, Mukti Niraadar Bhagati Lubhaane." Means, "And the pleasures of liberation, O' Garud (Kaagbhusundi is saying), can not be sustained without devotion to God; therefore, the wise devotees of God discard liberation in favor of devotion (Love and service) only." This is just like some one aims to graduate from High school as against some one aims to graduate from doctorate. High school, baccalurate, graduate or masters are all automatically usually included in Ph. D. Similarly, the liberation is automatically included in devotion. And without devotion even liberation can not be retained, just like any high school graduate trying to sit in a Ph. D. class neither gets to learn Ph. D. nor they can even retain (being not in touch) high school stuff. However, in spiritual sciences one does not need any literacy at all. Mohammed, Meera, etc. are burning evidence to this fact.

When we are devoted to God we offer everything, we get, to the Lord and then accept it from Him as His grace or gift. We offer the best to God. If we know or see a slightest fault in anything, we do not offer that to God. However, if we have already offered to God something which we know is the best, without any negative or bad thing in it, then we accept that as a grace of God even if we later find that there was something wrong in it. God takes care of His devotees. When we dedicate all our actions (good or

bad) to God, we become free of reaping the fruits (good or bad) or results of these actions. That is simple liberation. However, the emotions with which we develop love and devotion for God takes us a step forward closer to God. Hence, is the importance of Love, devotion and service to God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Remember God in daily life

Tue, 17 Nov 1998 11:58:57 -0500

{{Remember God in daily life}} (1)

Life in the world can become worship of God by regulating one's actions according to the path of action (Karma yoga) as described in the Bhagavad

Gita. It is important to understand that the scriptures do not belittle man's material pursuits and aspirations and they have accorded them their right due.

The scheme of the four ends of human life (Purusharathas) has been devised by the sages. When the action one performs, whether physical, mental or intellectual, is oriented to serve others, it becomes worship of God.

Karma yoga is a two-in-one path because it is possible to derive both material and spiritual ends according to one's preference. If one seeks material benefits

then the path is just a means to lead a righteous life in the world; whereas, when it is pursued with liberation as the goal, it purifies the mind of the spiritual aspirant and leads him on to the path of wisdom.

It is said that, when the different deities were worshipped by following the path of action they bestowed on man all that was necessary to lead a fulfilled life. Life lived according to the scriptural guidelines does not exploit nature because man then becomes aware that he is a part of the divine scheme. A righteous life will not upset the rhythm in nature. Only when people live in

harmony
with nature without exploiting it to satiate their greed can life be
sustained on the Earth. Likewise, a society will be healthy only when
people
are able to follow the ethical and spiritual values fearlessly.
Remembering
God while performing all actions is the acknowledgment of the fact that
the
Lord is the bestower of results. A doubt may arise why when an action
by
itself is capable of producing result, one should acknowledge God as
the
bestower of the result. The Gita points out that it is due to the
working of
the laws of nature that man is able to reap the result of his action
and
these laws are inbuilt into the creation by God. Man through his
ingenuity
is able to invent new technology because the possibility is there in
nature
and he only discovers the natural laws and applies them with his skill.
The
Gita draws man's attention to this fact so that he will remember the
Lord
whenever he taps a law to his advantage. Thus it is incumbent on one
to
remember God while enjoying anything because it is He who has made it
possible. In other cultures, life is divided into the secular and the
sacred, but according to Hindu culture
there is no such dichotomy. The Gita's path of action shows how man can
make his life sublime by orienting all actions to God. (Tuesday,
November
17, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) God must be remembered with every breath. Daily life is nothing
but a
series of numerous breaths -precisely an average 21,600 per day. And
each
individual has a fixed number (of course unknown to most) of total
breaths
in his or her life. That is why sages and saints of truth have
emphasized

to remember God's Word with every breath. Else it will be an utter
lost of
oneself without knowing his own self. But, Alas, one could do it
wihtout
knowing who, how, when, why to remember etc. questions. Students of
spiritually know answers to these questions from a saint who really
knows it.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Evolution theory and Avataras

Monday, November 16, 1998

{{Evolution theory and Avataras}} (1)

Among the several distinguishing characteristics of a sincere devotee,
who
carries out his religious obligations as directed by the scriptures
with
zeal uninterruptedly, is the agony he experiences when there is a break
in
his service to God. This is because, he is constantly in communion with
the
Almighty when he conducts worship, studies scriptural literature and
meditates. Saints have, in their hymns, pleaded with God not to leave
them
even for a split second as that would only plunge them in grief, as
they
would not be able to hear the separation.

One of the examples cited in sacred texts about this attitude of an
ardent
devotee is the fish which is happy in water, struggles when it is taken
out
of it, even for a very brief time. Likewise, the cobra which is
believed
(only) to carry a
gem on its hood, will die when the precious jewel is removed or thrown
out.
"A fish may rather survive even without water and the serpent may drag
on a
miserable and wretched existence without the gem in its head, but I
cannot
live without Rama," was the genuine appeal of Emperor Dasaratha before
Kaikeyi, who had put forth two requests. Initially, he thought she was

jesting or was
angry but when she blazed up like the fire on which had fallen an
oblation
of clarified butter he was stunned. {{The Ram-charita- Manas}} (2)
refers to
the
ultimatum given by the queen, "If Rama does not retire to the woods
assuming
the garb of a saint as soon as the day breaks, death for me and
ill-repute
for you will be the result. Bear this in mind."

The episodes in the version of the Ramayana by Tulsidas trace the
evolution
theory as the incarnations of the Supreme Being spell out a devotee's
behavior. The latter cannot brook being kept away from God as the
examples
of the
fish and cobra show. The manifestation as a tortoise reveals how, even
as it
withdraws its limbs when necessity arises, man should control his
senses
and remain unprovoked and immune to criticisms. It is not enough for a
person to merely worship God once or twice a day but one should
remember God
all the time. Even as the wild boar digs the earth deeply, one should
try to
extract wise lessons from happenings in the world. The Narasimha
Avatara
brings
out that God is everywhere and that one cannot indulge in misdeeds
presuming that no one witnesses Him. As Vamana, God indicates the
necessity for giving charity. For causes concerning the Divine, one
should
not hesitate in donating whatever possible. Parasurama represents anger,
Rama
stands for righteous conduct and an ideal man and Krishna, for His
superhuman powers and for delivering a glorious sermon to mankind.

(Monday,
November 16, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) As far as incarnations of God are concerned, there have been many

incarnations through out the history of His creation or universes. The various incarnations and their order follows closely with the evolution theory, interested scholars have found it and can find it. However, how is it going to help me understand God? What has happened is of no much relevance to us except to take note of the fact and learn from it, however, what is currently happening in this time and space is of importance to us because it affects us. We can find someone who knows God and we can then know Him in this life. Otherwise, Kabira, Nanak, Meera, Rama, Krishna, Mratanga, Vashishtha, Ramanandji, Ram Krishna Pramhans, Totapuriji, Bhardwajji, Ved Vyasji, Tulsi, Surdasji, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, BahaUllaha, Shabari, etc., (the list is never ending) did know Him, but when they were here we were not here and now when we are here they are not. Only a living spiritual master of our time, may that be Asharamji, Pandyaji, Satya Saibabaji, Radhaswamiji's inheritance of Agra or Bias, Pandurangji, Muraaribapuji, Mataji, or any other saint, who are known or not known to the mass media, could only help us to the extent s/he him/her self knows the supreme personality of God.

(2) The Ram-Charit-Manas, as is commonly known, is a book called Ramayan, but what it really means is that in our own "Manas" i.e., in our own self (mind, heart, body etc.) we should have the "charit" or character of "Ram" or God.

Of all the manifestations of God, the human form is with the most or major "ansh" or fraction of God. Each and every human (men, women and children) has all the characteristics or qualities of God but not in whole and also most of those characteristics or qualities are dormant. In Ramayan, it is said, "Ishwar Ansh Jeev Avinaashi," What it means is, "The soul or the jeev is Truth, never destroyed, and is a fraction of God." Thus, the man only can achieve God or know Him through the power inherent in him; and no other species of life, including deities or "devatas" can accomplish this task of knowing that supreme personality -Ram. The Ram which dwells in everyone -"Ramati so Ram." That is Ram-charit-manas. It can be experienced (or read) right in our own body and the whole manifestation of God -the entire universe (rather universes) can be seen right in this body in a microcosmic form. It is said in Vedas, "Yo Brahmaande So Pinde,"

means, "whatever is outside is inside -within this physical body", in which one has to see the Truth or God or spirit. Only way to know this is when the God Himself blesses us the interest to know Him. However, much depends upon our will to know Him because it is only reciprocatory. Then we find a preceptor who knows Him and who can guide us to known Him. He is familiar with the roads and streets of the Lord's town and the plan of His house. Hence, O' wise people seek a citizen of His country to sponsor you if you yearn to be a citizen of His country and who Lord or King would not love His citizens.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Reaching God through music

Mon, 16 Nov 1998 08:29:34 -0500

{{Reaching God through music}} (1)

The message of God, the most essential feature of which is His readiness to welcome into His fold anyone who totally depends on His protection, has been transmitted to people in many ways. The intellectuals study the scriptures and enjoy God's several benign qualities, particularly His mercy. Laymen have been provided with simple steps like visits to temples, bathing in holy rivers and chanting God's names. Some others are shown the path of meditation and they attend to the exposition of sacred texts. The entire emphasis, in all these prescriptions, is that man should cultivate detachment, and reach the Divine kingdom, never to be born again. The tradition of {"Bhajan" where even a common man can join the mass prayers is one of the easy methods to enjoy God's presence}} (2). (Monday, November 16, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The music we hear, through our physical ears and senses through our mind, is normally not the music through which we can reach God. However, this may be the first essential step to develop an interest towards knowing the real music through which only we can reach God. Also, once

we are interested in God we can appreciate and admire this music and enjoy it. The spiritual music is different. It is heard eternally, internally, not externally through our ears. It flows down from the spirit -which is also known as "Paraa Vaani." It is the sound of all celestial music which will take us closer to God and eventually realize God. Actually, even the physical sound coming out of our mouth, known as "Baikhari Vaani" originates from Paraa which through a series of transformation through Pashayanti and Madhyamaa becomes Baikhari. The celestial cosmic music or real music is Paraa Vaani which we hear inside and not through the media of air, ears, etc. This is what is known as hearing without ears, similar to seeing without eyes, or walking without feet. This only comes by the grace and blessings of God, as said, "Jaanki Kripaa Pangu Giri Lange, Andhe Ko Sab Kachhu Darsaaee; Baharaa Sune, Mook Hoe Vaachaal," Means, "By His grace and blessing the lame walks mountains, blind starts seeing everything; the deaf hears and the dumb becomes talkative,"

(2) The "bhajan" as is commonly known and sung through the human tongue is not the real bhajan which takes us close to God. This bhajan only pleases our senses (ears, mind and intellect, some times ego too) and provide fuel for this fire. However, it helps us to increase our interest and inquisitiveness to know the real bhajan. Actually, the body does not do bhajan, and the tongue is definitely a part of the body. If it would not be so the dead bodies would sing too. The real bhajan is done by the "jeev" it self. The tatva in the body closest to jeev is Aakaasha. Since it is not easily comprehensible, the next tatva of body -air which we breath, is commonly used to do bhajan until we can leave it and carry bhajan on through Aakaasha. The later is the stage of trance, only in which we see the realm of God. Only this bhajan can make us reach God. Many saints have said so. Kabira said, "Maalaa To Kar Me Phire, Jeebh Phire Mukha Maahin; Manavaa To Chahun Disi Phire, Ye To Sumiran Naahin." Means, "the rosary moves in the hand, and the tongue moves in the mouth; the mind wanders in all directions, this is not the bhajan." Kabira further

advises
us and then warns us, "Saansa Saansa Par Naam Le, Ek Bhee Saansa Naa
Khoy;
Kyaa Jaane Is Saansa Kaa, Avaan Hoy Naa Hoy." Means, "Remember God's
Word
with every breath, do not waste any breath; who knows how long this
breath
will continue or when it will stop." Hence, the real bhajan is done by
the
jeeva, which is beyond senses, mind, intellect, wisdom and ego, through
which we get a glimpse of God and ultimately reach Him. However, what
is
bhajan? How should it be done? When should it be done? Who should do
it? Why
should it be done? These all questions are only answered after one
meets a
saint or satguru (a true spiritual master). A student of Brahma Vidya
or
spiritual knowledge learns these realities of life and then can
appreciate
and understand this world as it is, if desired. But there can not be
any
student without a teacher, just like there can not be a teacher without
students. Even the mysteries of this chicken and egg situation then
solved
so easily. Hail to the mercy of God who makes this possible.
Therefore, O'
Learned wise men, leave the imitation -the fool's gold, and go for the
Truth, -the real gold, the God.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Friday, November 13, 1998 12:40 PM
Anger, chief enemy of mankind

{{Anger, chief enemy of mankind}} (1)

If a question is raised as to who among the human beings can be
categorized
as the "Blessed", the first place should go to one who keeps anger

under
check. "Fortunate indeed are those truly great souls whose intelligence
keeps anger under control, like a raging fire being put out by water"
are
the words of a great character known for his sagacity, who too once
yielded
to this scourge. Man's deadly and sworn enemy is anger. The havoc that
may
be caused when a person is seized with it cannot be described but it
can be
said that he may indulge in any type of heinous crime. "Burn your anger
before it burns you," is the warning given to entire mankind. One
cannot
suppress it, but can sublimate it.

Not that no one can escape its influence but it can be kept under
control by
the display of patience. Even when provoked, a person can keep calm.
Among
the 84 lakhs of God's creations, man alone is endowed with the gift of
the
power of discrimination. He has a body, mind and the thinking faculty.
If
the intellect warns him of the impending danger arising out of
succumbing to
the evil of anger the mind will rebel at first but it will meekly
submit to
it.

Episodes in our sacred classics refer to the damage caused by anger and
a
very remarkable dissertation of the impact of this foe has been
included in
the Ramayana. The Lord, in human form also cautions mankind about bad
temper's influence in several references in the Bhagavad Gita. Anger
arises
when desires remain unfulfilled, says this scripture.

It is said that, while surveying the ruin after he had set fire to
Lanka,
Anjaneya drenched his tail by plunging into the sea. Suddenly a fear
seized
him that the flames might have affected Sita also. He was disgusted
with
himself as he reflected about his "outrageous" deed of reducing Lanka
to

ashes. An angry man would insult even the saintly with harsh words and murder even revered elders. In his rage, such a person would not mind what he utters, however obnoxious it might be. A man in the grip of the evil of wrath would lose the sense of justice. "He alone is entitled to be called a man who ejects anger by patience, as the snake sloughs off its worn-out skin. I have yielded to a monstrous impulse of burning the city without giving a thought to Sita. The whole purpose of my search mission has been frustrated because of my thoughtless action. What will happen to all my efforts if by my unwitting act, Sita is lost in the blaze?" However there were good omens indicating that all would be well. He was glad to know that Sita remained unaffected by fire. Sita's fidelity made her immune to the flames. (Friday, November 13, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Anger, in deed, is man's one of the worst enemies. It arises when our "Kaam" or desires (Kaamanaaye) are not satisfied. It subdue our intellect and our capacity or capability of our thinking faculty or mind, hence, Indriyaas or sense organs act uncontrolled -as a result beating, shouting, biting, anger in voice or vision, etc. ensues. Its result is death, as said, "Jahaan Dayaa Tahaan Dharma Hai, Jahaan Kaam Tahaan Krodha; Jahaan Krodha Tahaan Kaal Hai, Jahaan Kshmaa Tahaan Aap." Therefore, wiseman forgive (which is a godly quality) and do not ravage anger.

Spiritually, it is one of the five "Prakrati" (or properties) of the "Aakaash" (sky or space) tatva (element), which is present in the human body along with air, fire, water, and earth. Thus, it is very subtle and it can only be controlled by those who understand "Aakaash" tatva. They are usually Mahatmas. There are other four "prakratis" of Aakaash. These are lust, attachment, greed, and ego. We can now see that all these five

"prakratis" are very difficult to overcome. God is seen only after a spiritual aspirant or enthusiast overcomes these five prakratis of aakaash.

This can be done easily by remaining in the company of saintly people who has overcome it. By far the most important, a living spiritual master, who is free of these vices, and ONE whose blessing can be sought through service, devotion and love, must be sought. This will germinate in ourselves the seed for living a life free of lust, anger, attachment, greed, and ego, and the vision of God then follows suit.

With best wishes.

Sincerely
DS

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Requisites of an ethical life

Mon, 9 Nov 1998 07:57:58 -0500

The virtuous life has been hailed by the scriptures not only because they are necessary to maintain the moral order in the world, but also with the intention of enabling man to progress spiritually. If human birth is not utilized for what it is intended for i.e., realizing the goal of liberation, then it is no different from that of other living beings. Four values have been emphasized in the scriptures as intrinsic and mandatory to an ethical life.

Speaking {{the truth}} (1) is the most important among them because all other virtues will be meaningless if one does not adopt this in life. The guidelines regarding its practice are outlined in the scriptural texts like the epics and the Puranas, though its importance is emphasized in the Vedas. That it is not easy to adopt it in life can be seen when peruses the episodes delineating this virtue, as for instance, in the case of king Harischandra who underwent untold suffering as he did not compromise on truth.

Likewise {{the charity}} (1) is another virtue which has been lauded in most traditions because it concerns the welfare of all in society. As an individual practice, it hinges on the spiritual merit (Punya) that accrues to the person who practices it, but as a social value its significance is all the more important. King Mahabali became immortal

because of his act of charity when the Lord sought alms from him in disguise. Since human birth is the result of both the merit and the sins accrued from previous lives, charity is a method recommended for neutralizing one's sins.

The merit of {{the penance}} (1) can be appreciated only when its result is seen practically for oneself. That it is capable of conferring the highest good is highlighted in many scriptural episodes. {{Penance is of two types - that performed for the sake of individual benefit and the other for the sake of the welfare of the entire world}} (2).

It is said that the performance of the daily rituals and austerities which must be followed according to one's standing in life resulted in great {{spiritual merit}} (1). There had been a case of {{even a dead person brought back to life because of a sage's spiritual power, which was possible because of his austere life}} (3).

The life of the Almighty when He assumed the human form during His incarnation as Rama testifies to His adherence to all these four virtues. The Ramayana depicts through the characterization of the Divine Couple, Rama and Sita, that one must be inspired to cherish these values even in the wake of sufferings in life. (Monday, November 09, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Speaking truth is the greatest penance, and those who always speak truth always has God with them, as said, "Saanch Baraabar Tap Nahin, Jhutha Baraabar Paap; Jaanke Rdahya Saanch Hain, Taanke Rdahya Aap." They always say truth in all three stages of life, i.e., awakened, dream, and deep sleep. They are beyond all these three stages and are in Turiya or trance stage. Whatever they speak becomes truth. This is the single most important virtue one should have for spiritual growth.

Charity is very important, but it is effective only when it is given to the right person. The recipient, having received it, must be able to utilize it for spiritual gain otherwise it goes waste. Without having a preceptor the result of charity is uncertain.

Penance is very important in spiritual progress. Here again, without a preceptor penance goes meaningless, as its direction is uncertain or unknown. The devotion gets stronger with penance and remembering

God's word becomes more easier and frequent.

Spiritual merit is by far the most important of all these four virtues for a spiritual life. Ethical life automatically ensues from it.

Spiritual merits can not be obtained until a saint or sage having those blesses us.

(2) Anything, penance or otherwise, done for individual benefit is selfish, or NO penance. Penance done for the benefit or welfare of the entire world is the real penance. But one can benefit others only after one is benefited first. The beggars are not choosers or givers. Only the Lord can give. One who knows the spirit can only make some one known. Hence, seekers of the truth must seek a knower of the Truth.

(3) It is true that the blessings of saint can do what can not be done by any, sometimes even by God. It is said, "Jo Kaam Davaa Bhee Kar Na Sake, Vo Kaam Duaa Se Hotaa Hai; Jab Murshid Kaamil Miltaa Hai, To Baat Khuda Se Hotaa Hai." Means, "The work which medicine can not do is done by the blessing of a Saint; when one gets a true living spiritual master one talks with God itself." Therefore, O leaned man, why not seeketh the spiritual seed, the (spiritual) plant or tree is abound to grow sooner or later. The salvation is assured, the glory of God is sung and the mysteries of this world are unfolded. Nothing more than remains to know. The knower, the knowee and knowledge all three becomes ONE. Call it anything in any language, form or shape.

With best wishes.

Sincerely

DS

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Discharge of duties obligatory

Sat, 7 Nov 1998 08:10:05 -0500

{{Discharge of duties obligatory}} (1)

The path of Self-surrender (Saranagati) is recommended {{as an alternative}} (2) to the path of devotion (Bhakti yoga) for realizing the goal of liberation. This method has been advocated by the preceptors of the tradition on the basis of the scriptures, especially the Bhagavad Gita.

The basic idea underlying the concept of surrender is the transfer of the responsibility of one's spiritual progress from oneself to the Lord. The concluding teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita is

the path of surrender according to this tradition. So it is apparent that Saranagati is resorted to when one is unable to pursue the path of devotion, after which it becomes incumbent on the Almighty to grant liberation to the Saranagat.

Is the path of Self-surrender easy to adopt as it appears to be? Saranagati which is a means to liberation on a par with Bhakti yoga with regard to efficacy, is less stringent to practice and this is the reason for its appeal and suitability to one and all.

But, the preceptors have been quick to point out in their works, which are intended for the followers, that after performance of Saranagati life must be oriented to God. It is not as if a spiritual aspirant can be absolved of all his transgressions of scriptural prescriptions because he has surrendered to God.

It is said, regulation of lifestyle according to the scriptural norms was obligatory for a Sarnagat even after surrendering to God. The manner in which his life must be regulated has been elaborately treated by the preceptors. They have made it clear that he must continue to perform his duties according to his station in life and not give up on them.

While a spiritual aspirant performs the recommended duties initially with the objective of liberation, after surrendering to God, he continues to perform them without expectation of result, surrendering the fruit of his actions to God. The dispassion towards worldly pleasures and gains, automatically becomes transformed into loving devotion and longing for God.

By constantly meditating on the Lord's auspicious traits it is possible to wean the mind away from worldly influences. The continued performance of the daily obligatory duties helps to reinforce spiritual life. Life surrendered to God is at once a means to liberation from rebirths and the end in itself. (Saturday, November 07, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Discharge of duties is obligatory, but one must know what are his duties? The jeev or life has only ONE foremost duty and that is to know its (our) real nature, the self, the spirit or God. Because, duties towards all others -such as friend, spouse, children, etc. are also due to and until the presence of that self in them, else they are

dead and there remains no duties to discharge.

(2) The self-surrender is NOT an alternative to devotion, it is an integral part of the devotion. One can not be devoted to God without surrendering oneself totally to God. We see this in our daily worldly life. A Spouse who really is devoted to her husband completely surrenders herself in order to receive the nectare of life, similarly children surrender themselves to teachers or parents to learn new things only when they are devoted to learn, else the teacher tells the same thing to all children yet only few devoted one get A's rest get D's, C's and B's or fail. Hence total unconditional surrender and devotion or LOVE are different names of the same thing towards GOD -the Sargun God, who can impart and initiate that emotion in any sincere devotee.

With best wishes

Sincerely

Ds

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A perennial source of inspiration

Fri, 6 Nov 1998 12:10:50 -0500

Hinduism (Sanatana dharma) derives its name from the very fact that it does not have an origin in point of time and its teachings are eternally valid.

The name has a broader connotation than just a religion and hence it is to be understood more as a way of life. This religion and ethos are based on the Vedas which are the revealed scriptural authority.

The scriptural texts based on the Vedas posit that the Supreme Being manifests in this world whenever righteousness is on the wane to re-establish it. Among the incarnations of the Almighty, the ones in which He assumed the human form are very important to mankind in that He taught and showed by example the manner in which the scriptural teachings have to be followed.

{{The Ramayana of Valmiki is a perennial source of inspiration for man to emulate, as the sage depicts Rama as an ideal human being without

highlighting His divine nature, except in a few instances. This makes it all the more appealing to those who take recourse to the Ramayana as a guide on human conduct. The depiction of Rama's sterling qualities right at the outset was significant in that the sage had indicated that the Almighty assumed the human form to enable man to ascend to the level of the Divine}} (1).

In the context of narrating Dasaratha's decision to crown Rama as his successor to the throne of Ayodhya, the focus is on Rama's noble qualities. As the king, Dasaratha had the power to unilaterally decide on the succession. But he convened an assembly of all the rulers of small territories, to seek their opinion in the matter.

The decision to crown Rama was unanimous and the words of approval so overwhelming that Dasaratha wondered whether there was something wrong with his rule. That power and pelf should come unsought to a deserving person and that one should not seek it is underscored in this episode. The Ramayana notes, ``Mother Earth (herself) sought for her protector the aforesaid prince, who was endowed with such (a lofty) character, was possessed of valor that could not be subdued and who vied with the guardians of the spheres in might and splendor."`

This context is one of the instances where Valmiki has drawn attention to Rama's divine nature to indicate that He had incarnated to wipe out evil. ``Entreated by the gods, seeking the destruction of the haughty Ravana, the eternal Lord Vishnu was born on the mortal plane as Sri Rama." (Friday, November 06, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is said that sage Valmiki first wrote the Ramayan before the birth of

Rama. That means the sage has made a forecast, which usually no sage does, i.e. tells the future. In reality, Valmiki has written about his own Raam -"Ramati-So-Raam," when it manifested in Naarad. The sage Valmiki has told his own spiritual experience in his own Ramayan in which he narrated the glory of his Raam -Naarad. Otherwise, in "Treta-Yug" (when Rama was born, the Valmiki must have been born before Him and) there was nothing available to write on. The Vedas and Valmiki Ramayan must have been conveyed orally from generation to generation until about 5-6000 years ago when Vedvyasji and another Valmiki must have written in what is known as Vedas and Valmiki Ramayan in present day form. The point is that a seeker of Truth must seek God -his own self, or spirit, in his own body in this life itself. That will be the mission accomplished of getting human birth, otherwise all lives are born, live and leave.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Promoter of universal brotherhood

Thu, 5 Nov 1998 12:18:02 -0500

Promoter of universal brotherhood

"Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen: {{the living higher religions}} (1) are going to influence each other more than ever before, in these days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its scripture the Adi Granth Sahib

ji will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world."

Thus wrote a great historian about the role of Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak.

The sacred hymns of the saint and reformer Guru Nanak, are several and all are embodied in the holy Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, which is worshipped by the Sikhs as the living embodiment of their 10 Gurus. The Granth Sahib was compiled by the fifth apostle. The prayer of the Sikhs offered twice daily ends with these words, "By the grace of Nanak, may the spirit ascend to greater heights; may general weal descend on all creations by God's grace." This truly conveys the essence of the Guru's teachings.

At the time when Guru Nanak was born (1469 A.D.) the society was ridden with outmoded ritualistic and superstitious practices, innumerable caste regulations and conventions, dividing people.

He gave up his worldly pursuits to take to preaching of {{his spiritual message of love}} (2) and peace, oneness of God, brotherhood of man and tolerance. He considered all human beings as the offspring of one God and therefore brothers. He said that God resided in every human being and that {{His holy name}} (3) could be the medium of His adoration.

In the holy city of Mecca, he lay down in the mosque weary and slept with his feet towards the shrine (Kaaba). Protesting against the sacrilege people shouted at him, but Guru Nanak asked them to turn his feet where God was not present. People pondered over this and asked him whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu. He said, "Neither, I am only a play thing made of the five elements of nature." He laid stress on {{the fundamental truth in all religions}} (4) and seldom asked anyone to give up his own faith.

Guru Nanak, who did his utmost to bring about unity among all, felt

that his law-abiding and peaceful followers should be courageous. History testifies that the Sikh spiritual leaders never fought except in self-defense, never raised the sword in anger, never forgot chivalry while fighting and looked to the future with hope and faith instead of despair. Guru Nanak's message is universal and is valid at for all times. His teachings can promote universal brotherhood based on mutual love, respect and understanding and foster unity and international peace. (Thursday, November 05, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is said that many religions, like languages, came and gone. A living religion of today was a dead religion (or not existed) in past and/or could become extinct in future. Jainism and Buddhism were not there before 2500 years ago, Islam and Christianity were not there before 1500 and 2000 years ago respectively, Sikhism was given by Guru Nanak 500 years ago, and so on.

It is an apathy that people consider only the living religions as higher religions. Actually, in reality, there is no higher and/or lower (religions) and there are no so many living or dead religions either.

In spirituality, all lives -men (children and women included without reference) have soul and there is only ONE religion -that is the religion of mankind.

Remember, if we are not a good human, we can never be a good Hindu, or Moslem or whatever. Spiritual meaning of religion is re-unite with God.

(2) Not only Guru Nanak, but all saints -like Tulsi, Valmiki, etc., gave the message of Love he also inculcated in his devotees so much of righteousness that eventually gave birth to a so called religion. The peace

automatically follows after the love is developed. Hence, in spiritual awakening love has a special, single, major role. However, the love must not be confused with the infatuations, attachments, and illusions. The real love is only that which makes a meeting with God.

(3) All saints said so. Guru Nanak was a true Guru "Sat-Guru" of that time.

However, no saint, including Guru Nanak, has openly said His holy name.

What is His holy Name? Is it Rama, Krishna, Jesus, or Mohammed, etc.?

Spiritually God does reside in every human being and actually God is that

spirit or soul, which is fully awakened, illumined. It is said, "Ghat

Ghat

Me Meraa Saainaa, Sunaa Ghat Na Koya; Balihaari Vaa Ghat Kee, Jaa Me

Prakat

Hoya." Means, "The God lives in every human being, there is no human being

without God; however, the importance is of that human being in which it manifest or who realizes Him." It is said, "Atma So Parmaatmaa" i.e.,

the

spirit or soul is itself God. But only people who know the spirit, see

the

spirit in everybody otherwise most people instead of seeing a live God

in

them they see the body only. His holy name is a mystery -only unfolded

by

a Sat-Guru -a true living spiritual master, like Guru Nanak was.

(4) The fundamental truth in all religion is that (they are all there

to

confuse and divide people, until one understands the truth, then) all

religions are ONE and same. They were all initiated after some saint

or

messenger of God in their memory because their devotees loved them

immensely. Just like Shahjahan mad Taj Mahal in memory of Mumtaj

Mahal,

where her spirit is worshipped even now in the basement; or Hare

Krishna

devotees made a temple of Prabhupada in his loving memory, devotees and

followers of Guru Nanak made Sikhism in His memory and after 10th

apostle

they took vows to keep Kachha (lion-cloth), Kadaa (bracelet), Kataar

(dagger), Kanghi (comb), and Kesha (hair) until they drive Britishers

our of
their mother land and it made a distinct Sikh caste or religion. So
the
Truth is hidden in all religions, overridden with rituals, dogmas, and
funny
man made rules, forgetting the spirit -which is in every humans and the
need
to know the true religion -their ownself, the spirit, God.

With best wishes.

Sincerely

ds

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The philosophical part of the scriptures

Wed, 4 Nov 1998 12:14:10 -0500

The authority for the religion and the philosophy of Hinduism (Sanatana
dharma), the Vedas, are revelations and they are eternal in nature.

They do

not have any human authorship and were revealed to the seers who
committed

them to memory. For this reason they are referred to as Sruti. They
were

codified by Sage Veda Vyasa into four - the Rg, Sama, Yajur and the
Atharva

Vedas. All the other scriptural texts are based on the Vedas and have
been

written by different sages only with the purpose of elucidating the
Vedas.

The Vedas are divided into two sections -{{ the Karma kanda which is
the

ritualistic portion and the Jnana kanda which is philosophical}} (1).

The

Upanishads which are in the Jnana kanda are the end of the Vedas and
hence

originally they were referred to as Vedanta (Veda-anta). But, in course
of

time, Vedanta has come to mean the systems of philosophy that have

developed
based on the Upanishads. Chronologically the Upanishads belong to the
later
Vedic period.

The meaning of the word ``Upanishad" suggests the method by which the
scriptures were taught. It means ``sitting down near" i.e., a group
of
pupils sitting near a teacher to learn the esoteric doctrines. These
treatises which deal with the Ultimate Reality thus became a name for a
mystery, an esoteric science, which could be communicated only when the
student had the equipment to receive it.

Though the Upanishads do not have human authorship their philosophical
doctrines have traditionally been associated with different sages like
Aruni, Svetaketu, Sandilya, Balaki and Yajnyavalkya, because of their
spiritual stature. The truths which the Upanishads declare were
envisioned
by these sages and not propounded as a result of other means of
knowledge
like sense perception, inference or speculation.

It is said that this sage was revered as the personification of
philosophical wisdom. Though he was a distinguished teacher of the
Yajur
Veda, that he was a master of all the four Vedas can be inferred from
the
fact that his pupil could chant the Sama which is the Rg Veda set to
music.

One proficient in these three is considered learned in all the four as
the
Atharva Veda is based on the other three.

He was the teacher of King Janaka of Videha and the Brhadaranyaka
Upanishad
which forms part of the Sathapatha Brahmana, relates an incident which
happened in the court of the king when the sage's knowledge was put to
test
by the court priest. During the course of the dialogue the sage
clarified
many abstract philosophical truths. (Wednesday, November 04, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There are many many mantras of Karma Kand which deals with everyday actions -such as sleeping, bathing, waking up, seeing lamp light in the evening, etc., which we perform as a human. These are all rituals. They take a long long time -sometime life time, and the end result is just fall short of Mukti or liberation. Similarly there are many mantras of Jnana (Gyan) Kand which deals with the philosophical aspects of spirituality. These also take a long time in understanding and the end result is only Mukti. Hence, in this age (Kali-Yuga) when the human life span is short (100 years) the Bhakti-kand is considered the best. There is only ONE mantra in it -Love, Devotion and Service, with focus on pure unselfish love. The spiritual knowledge is relatively easier to get in a short time through Love and Devotion and the Mukti is assured in it. However, the path of Love and Devotion and the ONE mantra has to be learned from a preceptor -a true living spiritual master or saint.

With best wishes

Sincerely

ds

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The seeming paradox of spiritual life

Tue, 3 Nov 1998 12:12:41 -0500

The scriptures attest to the fact that {{the Supreme Being deigns to manifest in the world from time to time out of His compassion for humanity to perform certain specific tasks for the sake of His devotees. But, this He does only occasionally and hence the same role is delegated by Him to the eternals who appear as mystics and preceptors to steer mankind towards the goal of liberation}} (1).

They made it their lives' mission to eschew worldly life and spent their time traveling from place to place spreading the message of divine love.

Like the rain-bearing clouds which shed copious rain on one and all without discrimination, these mystics taught the potency of the Divine names through Naam sankirtana to everyone.

{{The paradox of spiritual life - that it is not possible to have His vision even if one makes oneself eligible for His grace and the Lord graces His devotee only when He chooses to - is underscored. It is apparent that it is not possible to realize and envision God without a preceptor, without deep yearning and efforts to know Him, and without His will}} (2).

(Tuesday, November 03, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The former is known as "Nimit Avataar" or specific incarnation -such as Rama, Krishna, Narsingha, etc. where as the later is known as "Nitya Avataar" or constant incarnation -such as saints and preceptors like Ramakrishna Paramhans, Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Bahaulaha, etc. Note the words "the same role", that clearly indicates that there is no much difference between these two incarnations. It is the Nitya Avataar that is more important to humanity because there is not a single time on earth when they were not there, where as the "Nimit Avataar" is there for a short time only and influences the humanity for a long time by their enormous power and acts, all at the will of the "Nitya Avataars" -the saints, the Brahma-rishis.

(2) This is true, we have no control over Him. He appears to us at His sweet will, when He chooses to. That does not mean that we can cease remembering Him or His Naam. Since He can appear any time -sooner or later, the devotee has to be first ready for Him at anytime, then just wait

for
Lord's vision. It is simple, like if we keep driving we may not reach
to
work in time, due to many road blocks, or car trouble, or bad weather,
etc.
but if we don't drive at all and keep sitting at home, it is certain
that we
will never reach there in time. Therefore, a devotee longing for a
spiritual vision shall continue, ceaselessly, to yearn for God and
meditate
and pray for His mercy and vision without expecting any result.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Vedas common to all people

Mon, 2 Nov 1998 12:14:21 -0500

{{Vedas common to all people}} (1)

While it is easy for anyone to offer suggestions to others about the
code of
conduct, problems will arise when they are to be enforced. ``Obey your
parents'', the age-old directive, might have been possible to follow in
previous eras but in the modern context, differences of opinion are
bound to
exist as the attitude and the views of the old people will not be liked
by
youngsters. The result will be conflicts. But if adopted in life, these
``obiter dicta'', contained in the Vedas, can certainly be implemented
with
benefit.

{{(Being God's words, these Vedic commands are intended to do good to
the
people and make them rise to divine level)}} (2). A question may be
asked
whether God had parents and was there an opportunity for Him to carry
out
such instructions? As if to prove this, He (Rama -the god) was
``born'', not
in a poor family when circumstances may compel a young man not to
differ
from his parents, but amidst opulence and power. Still, He implicitly
obeyed

His parents and spent 14 years in forest undergoing indescribable suffering and sacrificing comforts.

The Vedas are common to all sections of the society and it may be noted that though the number of people who were qualified to master them had been dwindling, yet others held these few pundits in great esteem and reverence.

{{They prescribe the methods to lead a happy, contented, disciplined and ideal life. One who upholds these virtues should also help others in the society making them reach the highest ladder and see that their distress is removed}} (3).

When God chose to descend on this world to fulfill the promise extended to sages, the four Vedas also took the combined form of the epic, Ramayana, and hence this work amplifies the pithy statements in the former. Even today when scholars chant the Vedas, those who listen to them will feel that they had missed the golden opportunity of learning the same. Even as all cannot own cows but can purchase its milk, people who appreciate the efforts of the Vedic scholars can give due encouragement to them. {{The Ramayana is full of "Mantras" and is an asset to the world}} (4). The role of destiny is illustrated therein to point out that what is due for a man will be received unasked. If not eligible to get it all his attempts will be futile.

We should try to cultivate in us the 16 outstanding qualities possessed by Rama. Among them are: to be easily accessible, to show compassion, to be friendly, to repay debt of gratitude and to be generous as mentioned in the work and these will not be difficult to adopt in one's life. (Monday, November 02, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Meaning of Veda is "to know" the Truth, the reality. And everyone wants to know the Truth, therefore, Vedas are common to all people, including Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, etc. Man is "Sat, Chit, Aanand". The Chit means knowledge, to know hence, he is always curious to know the Truth, his goal is to know Truth and get bliss. If Vedas are considered only Hindu's scriptural texts Moslems, Christians, and others will not want it and it can not be then common to ALL people.

(2) Vedas are known as God's words. It is said that there were originally three Vedas and Saint Ved Vyasji wrote it first time, made four Vedas out of three, and also wrote four Up-Vedas. He also wrote Bhagawat Gita -an Upnishad. Vedas as is known today are the most ancient of written documents of Hindu scriptures, supposedly some 4000-6000 years old. However, humans existed since some 1.8 million years and the life since 1.8 billion years. And God has to exist before all this. Thus Vedas as books though existed for last 4 to 6000 years but Vedas -as knowledge of the Truth or God existed much before this, since the dawn of the creation, with God -the Aadi Purush (the first man). Hence, they are known as God's words. Also all saints, like Ved Vyasji, who knew God are just like God, hence also they are known as God's words.

(3) Who would not like to live a happy, contented, disciplined, ideal life? All men -whether they are Christians, Moslems, Hindus, or Buddhists, etc. would want to live a pain-free, happy, healthy, contented life and when anything -may that be Vedas, Bible, Koran, Ramayan, or Gita, etc., prescribes a method to do so (live a happy life), the knowledge of this

method becomes Veda. Once some one knows the trick his or her sole goal or purpose in life is to make others known -that is "Parmaaratha", the service to humanity.

(4) So are Vedas, Koran, Bible, Buddha or Jain Granths, etc. full of mantras and are assets to the world. Where does one go from all these Mantras? Confused, bewildered, one spends his or her whole life getting no where, until they find ONE God and ONE mantra. It is said, "Tantra Mantra Sab Jhutha Hai, Mat Koee Bhramo Sansaar; Saar Sabad Jaane Bina, Koe Na Utaare Paar", means, "Al the tricks and mantras are false, O worldly man, don't you confuse in this false world; without knowing the WORD of God, no body can provide salvation." Hence, one should know the WORD -one mantra, from someone -a real living spiritual master (saint or sadhu) who knows it and then experience the WORD in oneself. The TRUTH, KNOWLEDGE and BLISS all follows suit. Otherwise, there are millions if words, mantras and names but none of them provides salvation, until we know the true, original WORD which is secret and which is only known by the elite few; as said, "Koti Naam Sansaar Me, Taate Mukti Na Hoya; Aadi Naam Jo Gupt Jap, Viralaa Bujhe Koya." Therefore, seekers of spiritual knowledge must know that ONE mantra from that ONE GOD.

With best wishes
Sincerely
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God stands by those who seek His grace

Sat, 31 Oct 1998 18:28:08 -0500

Though God has endowed man with several faculties like the power of speech, listening, seeing and using his discrimination, yet he fails to take advantage of them and reach the goal set before him. God can be pleased and attracted only by demonstrating one's sincerity and devotion. He will yield to man's pleas and get "bound" by the cord of

this powerful force. Scriptural texts point out how irrespective of age or other considerations, God has rescued devotees who had pinned their total faith in Him, from dangerous situations. But He knows what transpires in the mind of everyone and to presume that one carries out any act according to his own wish since there is none to witness it, will be foolish because being Supreme, the Lord is aware of one's intentions and deeds.

In the Mahabharatam, two warriors approached Lord Krishna, one with arrogance and the other with humility and realizing the purpose of their visit, He granted armed strength to the former and moral power to the latter. Likewise, He did not fail to protect His devotees when they were about to be routed in the war as the commander of the enemy force used all his valor. Krishna even broke His vow in such a grave situation, as His devotees' interests were to be safeguarded. Many are the instances where God has stood by those who took refuge in Him, thereby providing inspiration to us to follow the path of virtue and gain His grace.

Both the incarnations of God, as Rama and Krishna, were to re-establish Moral Order. The former on a crucial occasion says that no one is to be blamed for the turn of events and that the mistake for any mishap is in us. The pranks of the Divine Child, Krishna, when unbelievable acts were performed by Him, instil hope in devotees that God's guidance is always available to those who seek it with sincerity. Outstanding persons have adored the activities of Krishna. What distinguished the Lord when He descended on earth as a human being were His eyes that were not only bewitching but hypnotised men. Mystics in this era have sung in praise of the Lord in the idol forms enshrined in temples.

During their brief stay in this world because death is certain for anyone born,{{men in need of peace should associate themselves with saints and God's representatives as this step will ensure cultivation of purity of mind and treading the paths of devotion and righteousness}} (1). Uttering the {{glorious names of the Lord will take them nearer God}} (2). It is men's duty to avail the privileges and opportunities provided by God to get rid of their distress.
(Saturday, October 31, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Only association with a saint can lead one to salvation and spiritual knowledge, none else can. Hence,wise men always look for a living spiritual master and learn the NAME or WORD from Him.

(2) God is ONE, hence the true name of God ought to be ONE also. However, there are many names of God in past and none of them can take the seeker nearer God, but if the seeker is sincere and serious to find the Truth a preceptor or true living spiritual master will reveal him/her the NAME or WORD and that is the assured way to obtain salvation and devotion. The God is thus known. The "Gyaataa, Gyaan, and Gyey" all three become one and nothing more remains to be known. That is the state of Brahmagya or Brahmagyani, the knower of the God or spirit.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Company of holy men makes one perfect

Fri, 30 Oct 1998 13:07:48 -0500

Birth as a human being is the most precious and enviable gift of God.

All

God's creations carry out common tasks but man is privileged to shape the

course of his life in a planned manner by using his faculties. He can cultivate devotion to God and discriminate between good and evil. He can not

only make his own brief stay pleasant but also make others happy.

But invariably man turns arrogant and becomes conscious of his distinctions

by virtue of his academic acquisitions or his wealth or position or fame and

often by his birth in a higher strata of society. He then behaves as if he

is an authority and tries to ridicule others.

The way to overcome this unfortunate ``imagination of superiority," though

in reality it is not, has been shown in our scriptures. Among the several

steps, the most important is to seek the company of saintly men, in whose

presence the person who exhibits his conceit will feel ashamed of his smallness.

What characterizes such divine souls, who may not be many in number, is

that they are {{in constant touch with God}} (1) by virtue of their austere life, utter humility, simplicity, absence of anger, passion and ego and are absolutely unconcerned about worldly pulls. Like the small lamp from which several others can be lit, they will shed luster because of their purity in words, thoughts and deeds.

By associating with such pious and godly souls, one can get rid of one's own defects, acquire good qualities, and become perfect. The scriptural texts pinpoint the need to eschew ego of whatever nature it may be and shed conceit.

The Mahabharatam tells us how Arjuna, who was solely dependent on Krishna {{(God in human form)}} (2), suddenly became haughty and ``commanded" the latter to station the chariot in the midst of the warfield. He became aware of his valor and displayed his pride. This attitude ought to have been totally shed by him.

Man should consider himself {{the last and least qualified among the ranks of devotees}} (3) and that in the presence of righteous person, his attainments are insignificant. If one is thus humble, and if by chance he errs, God will rectify his defects. But arrogance will receive due punishment.

The story of Bali in the Bhagavatam reveals the submission of a king with all his attainments to God and how he was rewarded. God took two different incarnations as a diminutive scholar (Vamana) and as one who pervades the entire universe. (Friday, October 30, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Truth is God, and God is Truth, thus, those who are in constant touch with God are in essence the Truth itself. Their company is true "Sat-sang".
The company of the truth, the God.

(2) God in human form is more useful and important than the all pervading God. It is only through the saint, the preceptor, that we can know God.

(3) True, one of the way to kill ego is to consider myself as servant of the servants of God -"Daasandaas". This feeling automatically comes when we are in the company of holy men, saints and God.

With best wishes
Sincerely
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Noble traditions must be safeguarded

Thu, 29 Oct 1998 15:25:29 -0500

Noble traditions must be safeguarded

Being mortals and constantly battered by worldly impacts, it is very easy for us to become victims of injudicious acts. Some of us may have committed ourselves not to do any wrong, by resorting to the procedure of offering {{`surrender" at the feet of the Lord through the guidance of a preceptor}} (1). Still there may be occasions for us to unwittingly indulge in sinful deeds. What scriptures say, under such circumstances, is not to justify what we have done taking recourse to certain exceptions granted in the rules in the Moral Law but {{plead with God to forgive us and assure Him (rather yourself) that the wrongs will not be repeated}} (2).

Even veterans who had digested the entire sacred works, under rare circumstances, were forced to act against their conscience and as such

the position of laymen needs no mention. However, the only way not to incur the displeasure of God is to take refuge in Him. The preceptors din into our ears to refrain from doing wrongs by referring to instances in the holy texts based on the Vedas. They will be careful to impart lessons concerned only to those who sincerely believe in the authority of the basic sources of knowledge and are eager to assimilate the contents. {{The Acharya (preceptor) will light up the imperishable lamp of spiritual tradition only in some deserving disciples found fit to receive the contents}} (3).
Texts point out to some who are deceitful, perverse, hypocritical and conceited, who should not be imparted spiritual wisdom. A verse says that one may sow seeds on saline soil, give one's daughter in marriage to an effeminate bridegroom or hand over a garland of flowers to a monkey but not reveal the "secrets" to one who is unworthy and not devout.

These messengers of God were extremely discreet in respect of the knowledge that they transmitted to their students. {{They first mastered the scriptural texts and then took God's permission to expound the principles thereunder}} (4). Thus the master as well as the pupils were zealous in safeguarding our noble traditions. The purpose of the study by aspirants is to know the nature of relationship between God and His devotees and get the obstacles removed from their journey to His empire. The service to the Lord extends to His messengers and nothing could be done against the prescribed codes. Those who have thus received training would not swerve from the path of righteousness shown by the Acharyas who have more forbearance than Mother Earth. (Oct. 29, 1998)

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COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) One can not surrender at the feet of the Lord, which is hypothetical and undefined or un-conceived, without going through the guidance of a preceptor. Hence, the first thing first. Forget the God, we don't know His entity, one shall look for a perfect preceptor (a living spiritual master) instead of the Lord God.

(2) To err is human, but to assure Him, rather yourself, that the wrongs you did once will not be repeated. However, wisemen learn from others wrong doing and do not do themselves wrong; on the other hand, some stupid, idiots do wrong and not learn from it and repeat it again and again. The later has no help from being doomed.

(3) The preceptor will light up the such a "chiraag" -the imperishable lamp, in only deserving devotees. Hypocrites and other interested only in intellectual learning would waste their time. They should be honest enough in saying No thanks. Let me remain my way. I do not care for divine, immortal, I want to know everything about perishable, mortal world only.

(4) The messengers of God first had the vision of the Truth, the God, they first knew the God first hand, then they wrote scriptures. How can the writer master them? Also some one has to write them before some one can master them! Then with their God's permission they expound the principles thereunder.

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Saint's message of love

Oct. 28,'98

The chief aim of saintly men, who lead a life wedded to virtues even in the midst of worldly bustle, is to reform people who had chosen a wrong path.

Such men of piety intend to bring about integration among all sections of society and make them religious-minded and detached, which alone can give

them moral strength to face any type of turmoil.

These messengers, by performing their austerities, adopting simplicity, and {{speaking truth at all times}} (1), will ask those who seek their guidance, to rely on God totally and display their deep faith in His powers to remove their distress.

A saint who was offered a pair of scissors made of gold, declined to receive it but preferred to have a needle cast out of iron so as to string all articles together. The message spread by such Godly men is to cultivate devotion and seek divine grace.

Prayers do not mean that people should pester God with requests to grant them all their needs. God is certainly aware of the requirements of His devotees and will bestow on them what they deserve. But {{people should not be misled by some who pose as God's representatives and claim to possess certain superior powers. They should not also be judged by external appearance (with special dress) but by their internal purity}} (2).

A saint is a person of extraordinary character who would not injure anyone's sentiments, is an ardent devotee of Lord and who propagates the message of Divine Love, of non-violence and vegetarianism and changed the hearts of people by his own example. His outpourings compiled as hymns contain certain Do's and Don'ts, like ``The mind must be flushed out of impurities'', ``One should not entertain hatred, jealousy, malice or other wicked tendencies."''

``Let me not offend anyone" is his plea. All his thoughts are on His God and His merciful acts. ``Even if, (by force of circumstances) should I be forsaken by my parents and others, let me cling to your feet forever" and so ``Don't spurn me", is his stirring appeal. The saints have urged,

in
praise of the Lord, to give them the power to think good, speak truth
and do
only pious acts. (Oct. 28,'98)

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COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Speaking truth at all times brings one uniquely close to God. But
it is
very hard to do so, as said, "Saanch Baraabar Tap Nahin, Jhootha
Baraabar
Paap; Jaanken Radya Saancha Hai, Taaken Radya Aap" ,means, "the biggest
penance is speaking Truth, and the biggest sin is to lie; those who
speak
Truth has God in their hearts." As a by product or corollary of it,
such
people who always speak Truth, although they refrain from saying
anything
about future but, if they say anything it ought to materialize or come
true,
i.e. their blessings
always
comes true.

(2) There are a bunch of them -dime a dozen. Wearing saffron dress or
keeping long hair or shaving clean head does not necessarily make
messenger
of God. It is said, "Naam Na Puchho Saadhu Kaa, Pucha Leejeeye Gyan;
Mol
Karo Talwaar Kaa, Padi Rahan Do Myaan", means, "Do not ask the name if
a
saint, instead ask him the spiritual knowledge, what is there in the
sheath
when one needs the sword" as the sword is important and not its cover.
Hence, the messenger of God never proclaims themselves as such and
never
shows outer appearance any different than any other ordinary human
-Naaraayan.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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A valuable guide for human excellence

Thu, 29 Oct 1998 13:56:45 -0500

Long before the sacred texts were presented by experts to enable people to adopt the rigid rules under the Law of Morality, one of the Puranas (old history books/scriptures) has vividly portrayed the possible rise of wicked elements and their atrocious deeds violating divine injunctions. One of them, has anticipated the shape of events to take place, the concern of the wiser men, their prayers to the Lord and the later's assurance to re-establish the moral order, by duly punishing the persecutors.

This follows the Lord's presence in the world and the enactment of the drama, {{the Ramayana}} (1), which now centuries after it had been left for posterity's benefit, still remains as a valuable guide for human excellence. Several commentaries and many adaptations of this poem have since been written. Tradition looks upon the three monumental works - the Ramayana, the Mahabharatam and the Bhagavatam - as conduits for the vast field of spiritual knowledge insulated in abstruse language and treasured in the eternal Vedas.

In the entire range of religious literature, few other poems are more charming, pleasing to the ear and {{saving the soul}} (2) by invoking the grace of Rama, than poet Valmiki's. It outlines how through {{self-surrender}} (3), man can reach his goal. Valmiki was pleased mightily by the assurance of the creator of the world that what he composes would be immortal and would endure as long as the mountains stood and the rivers flowed.

Among all the eight sentiments the divine poem comprehend that compassion is predominant. Rama was kind to the crow that injured Sita, rescued the sages even though Sita did not approve it and declared unequivocally and emphatically that anyone who falls at His feet taking refuge, and relies upon Him, He shall rescue him. ``This is My vow, My practice," He adds. Even as the Lord was determined to save and protect those who seek His

grace, the Divine Mother too makes a solemn statement. ``Who is that in the world who has not committed any offense. The only power in us is to forgive." Against odds, opposing and absorbing affections, both do not deviate from Truth. Valmiki's bifocal approach to {{Rama as God and Rama as man}} (4), coalesce with perfect human situation.

COMMENTARY:

Dear Friend:

(1) The Ramayan -is an epic, a holly book as most know it. However, in spirituality or in reality the Ramayan means the "house of Ram". The human body which houses the spirit or soul. It is also called Ram -"Ramati So Ram". The omnipotent omnipresent God, the Nirgun Brahma.

(2) The soul nether dies, nor takes birth, hence the saving the soul does not arise, what is meant here is pleasing to senses -including intellect, and ego. Such aspirants of spiritual knowledge hardly accomplish any.

(3) Self surrender is an assured way to reach one's goal but it is not easy to do so, because the mind, intellect, wisdom and ego are hard to consume.

(4) Ram as God and Ram as man -are these two different entities? OR -the man who knows God is like God. In Ramayan it is said, "Jo Jaanat So Dehi Janaaee, Jaanata Tumahin Tumahin Hoi Jaaee." Means, "one who knows can make someone known, knowing you is like becoming you." Saints are people but having godly qualities are like God.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Humility helps one obey Divine Will

Wed, 30 Sep 1998 08:16:44 -0500

It can never be disputed that arrogance ruins a person who is

otherwise well set to enjoy progress in life. How this evil trait spoils him can be noticed from his demeanor and frequent claim that he has achieved success in his tasks by his own merits and efforts. "I can do and undo anything" will be his glib talk. On the other hand, as seen by the behavior of saintly men, he should say "God has made me to carry out this task and I am only a tool in His hands."

Such {{humility will naturally lead him to obey the Divine Command and discharge the ordained duties ought to be performed by him}} (1). Whatever may be the status or class/caste of a person, these duties ought not to be neglected. After so discharging his pious obligations, he can say that he has done so due to Divine Grace. A statement by God to give up all acts and submit to Him, should never be misconstrued as not to do anything. It should be properly interpreted to mean that all acts should be done but the benefits accruing therefrom should be dedicated to God. That is God's real intention.

How are these duties to be performed?, one may ask. {{Constant practice will surely enable a person to achieve what he desires}} (2).

God assures His devotees that He will definitely guide them. It is necessary to remember in this connection that it is better to do the duties prescribed for an individual than to aspire to do another man's. Very often the aloof nature arising out of the performance of one's own actions is mistaken as a sign of weakness. If someone ridicules such a conduct, it is imperative to tell them that they are only criticizing the "external body, which is perishable, as death is certain to anyone born", while the soul within is permanent, ready to occupy another place.

In Mahabharatam, it is cited the manner in which Arjuna showed his temporary haughtiness by asking his "charioteer" (the Lord) to station the vehicle in the middle of the battle ground, requesting Him to describe the arrangements made for the commencement of the battle. However, suddenly he became grieved at the prospects of so many being killed. The Lord cleared his various doubts and the outcome is the essence of the Upanishads called "The Bhagavad Gita". It is a medicine to cure man's internal maladies. God visits the world when unrighteousness raises its head. He has made a categorical statement that He would stand by all those who follow the moral law and abide by the scriptural injunctions. {{"If nothing is possible, surrender to Me, doing your duties, but leaving the fruits thereof to Me", He adds}} (3). (Wednesday, September 30, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is experienced that more one knows more one feels how little one knows. We have seen that a pitcher full of water does not splash where as when it is half full it not only splashes but makes noise also. Thus humility keeps one right on his target and silently allows one to progress spiritually. The more a person spiritually developed the more humility s/he will have. Humility is like a shield of the warrior who does have the sword which he never uses yet protects himself. It is very important to have humility. However, it does not develop by knowledge where as it is easily obtained by service, because the service can not be performed unless one consumes his ego.

(2) I have seen in villages, where oxen are used to pull water from the well with a large leather bucket and rope, that the soft rope rubs against the hard sandstone and makes a groove in it. This is an evidence that anything repeated constantly will yield to repetitions. Thus spiritual practices done constantly and repeatedly ought to attract the attention of God and the God will manifest Himself in human form to protect and bless His devotees. This satiates his desire of spiritual knowledge which culminates in to Yoga, -the union with God.

(3) The total unconditional surrender comes only with humility. The promise of God never goes unfulfilled. All preceptors fulfill their promises and those who can't do so don't make promises. It is the focal point of Gita that "Do your duty and be unmindful of result, i.e., offer the results to God." Krishna said that to Arjuna and any true spiritual master can comfortably say that to his disciples. Thus the devotees must do their duties with humility and not wait or expect its results. Such a devotee always pleases God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Adherence to rules pleases God

Mon, 28 Sep 1998 21:02:03 -0500

Strict adherence to certain rules prescribed in holy texts will make God Himself visit devotees and fulfill their desires. {{Foremost among them is to speak truth only}} (1). Under no circumstances, even if unpalatable or even should it incur the displeasure of others, one should utter falsehood. At times, a person may try to wriggle out of a piquant situation by telling a lie but later, he may find himself duped (There are a very few exceptions to this golden rule). {{Truth shall always triumph, declare all sacred works}} (2).

Secondly, meaningless animosity towards other creations of God should never be harbored. This will mean that a person should see God seated within everyone, irrespective of consideration of caste or status. "Treat all alike", says the Lord in the Gita. One should show respect to all forms of God. The next important factor is to extend compassion to those in distress, unmindful of personal inconvenience, if any. The recipient of one's help in times of distress may not care to repay his debt of gratitude but that is not the donor's concern. Even animals display their gratefulness if just a morsel of food is offered. What about men who are gifted with several faculties? (3) Contentment is yet another quality which has to be cultivated, if not naturally found in one. If God wills, He will shower abundant wealth and none can prevent His act. On the contrary, whatever may be a person's efforts, he may fail to obtain Divine mercy, if God feels he is not entitled to receive it (4). All these noble traits were displayed by two children (as mentioned in the Bhagavatham) who reposed total faith in Divine dispensation. Tested in different ways, they were firm in their conviction and were rewarded.

The last and very significant advice is to maintain equipoise even when there is scope for getting demoralized due to successive failures in life. Happiness and grief are part of man's life and should there be signs of displeasure from demi-gods, it is possible to remove their ire by the performance of certain rites. Even remaining in the family, one can show detachment (5). This is possible if the couple stand united and see eye-to-eye on all family matters.

All these morals are made available to us in the story of a king who lost everything in gambling, separated from his wife and children and ultimately by virtue of the observance of the ethical rules by the husband and wife, they were able to emerge unscathed from severe trials. Their story was narrated, in Mahabharat, to the Pandavas by a sage who pointed out to them that they were definitely better-placed. (Tuesday, September 29, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is utmost important to speak truth only. It is said that there is no righteousness equal to speaking truth and there is no sin equal to telling lies because one who speaks truth by heart has the God Himself seated in him; as said, "Saancha Baraabara Tap Nahi, Jhutha Baraabara Paap; Jaaken Hardaya Saancha Hein, Taake Hardaya Aapa." But one can not speak the truth always until one keeps the company of the truth speaking people for a long time. Hence please

seek the company of such a people.

(2) Truth always wins sooner or later, as said, "Satyamev Jayate."
One interesting thing about always speaking truth is that we have less or no stress in our mind. We do not have to remember who we spoke truth and who we did not, if we always speak truth to all.

(3) In another words, LOVE everybody. We can not do this until we see the same common spirit in everybody. It is rare at best or impossible at worst to hate our own selves. No body hates oneself merely because of their very creation and sustenance or existence by illusion, hence if people understand their real self, who they are, they will love everybody, because the same self which is in them is in everybody else. Thus how can one who knows the Truth keep animosity with others when s/he cannot keep animosity with her/him self.

(4) Contentment is the biggest wealth one can have. It is said that, "Go Dhan Gaja Dhan Baaji Dhan, Aur Ratan Dhan Khaan; Jab Aave Santosh Dhan, Sab Dhan Dhuri Samaan", what it means is that, "The wealth of many cows, elephants, material possession and even the mines of precious stones like diamond, emerald and other jewels are all worth dust when the wealth of contentment is obtained." One of the retired physics professor of Banaras Hindu University told me once that, "Everything is warmer, no cold at all, than the object whose temperature is -273 degree Celsius. A content person does not want anything, not even air to breath. He is bound to be happy, if there is any for him, with anything more than nothing.

(5) This is third cardinal principle of spiritual success (First: Always speak Truth; Second: Love everybody; and Third: Don't be attached to anybody). Only people who has true LOVE for the spirit can stay detached from the world and relations. All relations are because of the self or spirit or Truth in people other wise they are merely shell to be discarded sooner or later in one way or other. We notice that everyday, once the truth or spirit is no more in the shell no body wants to keep the shell, no body love the shell anymore. Hence, it is evident that we are detached, the attachment is only due to spirit. That spiritual attachment is LOVE. The True love, which when comes the truth automatically comes with it and we know the God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Worship of the Divine Mother

Sun, 27 Sep 1998 17:02:18 -0500

The custom of worshipping the Divine Mother during the nine nights at the beginning of the four seasons has long been in vogue in the Hindu tradition, but in course of time it has become confined to autumn, which is called Sharad Navaratri. This nine- day festival is a time exclusively devoted to the worship of Sakti who is the dynamic aspect of the Supreme Being.

There are three forms of the Mother Goddess (Tripura-sundari) - Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi - responsible for the different functions involved in the creation and sustenance of the cosmos. Durga represents physical prowess and power, and She is worshipped on the first three nights. By propitiating Her during Navaratri the devotee secures Her protection throughout the year as She wards off all difficulties and obstacles.

The day of Mahalaya Amavasya (New moon day), after which this nine-day period is reckoned, is the day meant for the discharge of one's indebtedness to one's forefathers. Man by his birth is indebted to many for he cannot exist alone and this day is meant for renewing the promise given to the ancestors to follow the path of righteousness (Dharma).

In explanation of Navaratri, it is said that all festivals must be understood as a renewal of one's promise to the different deities, to preserve the tradition and culture of Sanatana dharma, which was necessary for the welfare of the entire creation. The second three nights of Navaratri are dedicated to Lakshmi and the last three to Saraswathi.

Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth; She not only endows one with wealth but also sustains it. Saraswathi is the Goddess of learning and by bestowing spiritual knowledge She takes one to the plane from which there is no return to bondage. {{Thus worshipping the three aspects of the Divine Mother during Navaratri helps one to emerge victorious in all aspects of life}} (1), which is indicated by Vijayadasami, the tenth concluding day of the festival.

{{In Southern India, Navaratri is celebrated as the festival of dolls. The arrangement of the different tiers of dolls, which at once brings out the artistic talents of the people, signifies cosmic integration - the inter-connectedness of everything in the universe. Nothing is left out in this display - from the level of the Gods to the material necessities of life}} (2).

The worship of the Divine Mother is as old as the Vedas, of which the Srisukta is one of the most important hymns extolling the Goddess

occurring in the Rig Veda. This festival reiterates that everything in this cosmos is the very manifestation of the Divine Mother. (Monday, September 28, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Worshipping the three aspects of the divine mother during nine days only can give the worshippers victory in all aspects of their lives! Imagine, what would worshipping the God at all the time through out the year give to the worshippers? Hence, the curious people must know the Word, meditate on it daily, and worship God everyday.

(2) These are all customs and cultures developed over time. It seems these are nothing more than the imitation games of dolls represented for each goddesses. Men must come out of fictitious customs, beliefs, and rituals, and concentrate on the reality. Just like after getting a real house or a real car in their adulthood people cease playing with toy houses and cars; interested devotees after getting to know the real God cease fooling with many of the thousands of fake deities, gods, and goddesses. But it is utmost most important to play and make a mental image about the fiction until they get real Truth. Einstein said, "Imagination is more important knowledge." Because imaginations raises questions and a curious finds its answers -the knowledge. Therefore, know ONE who knows and know His (spiritual) knowledge.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Discharge duty at all costs

Sat, 26 Sep 1998 07:43:58 -0500

{{Discharge duty at all costs}} (1)

The Bhagavad Gita is a gospel of action. Lord Krishna elaborates on all the philosophical subtleties right from the beginning of His sermon to Arjuna, to remove his ignorance about the nature of the Self (Atman), but He underlines the importance of performing one's duties first by following the path of action.

Though He makes it clear that man can get the right perspective of life only when he is blessed with the knowledge of the Self, the Lord makes it clear that the pursuit of the spiritual goal does not mean

shirking one's duties in life. Arjuna after listening to Lord Krishna's exposition of the paths of action (Karma yoga) and wisdom (Jnana yoga) committed the mistake of designating the path of wisdom as superior to the path of action and questioned the Lord as to why He urged him on the path of action (i.e. to fight instead).

It is important to understand that comparison is possible only when there are options available. The Gita does not advocate these two paths as alternatives; both are essential in life. It is not possible to adopt either of them alone. One has to first embark on the path of action and then graduate to Jnana yoga. Since Arjuna wanted to avoid waging the war he wanted to avoid the path of action and hence raised such a doubt to the Lord.

It is said that there was no illogical in the scriptural prescriptions; so it was only in one's interpretation that doubts can arise. Moreover, the scriptures must not be followed with blind faith but with understanding and conviction. Having raised such a doubt Arjuna was quick to point out that His teachings could not be illogical but only his understanding, and hence he wanted the Lord to suggest the path suitable to him.

In this context the Gita hints about the importance of developing the capacity for discrimination (Viveka). One cannot expect the scriptures to dispense advice; it expects the student to learn with understanding and apply his mind with discrimination in any given situation. For instance, it is easy to preach "Speak the truth", and expect the student to follow it blindly, but it requires a good teacher to instill the merit of this value in the student.

Though there are exceptions, in general, everyone has to follow both these paths. Parallely the scriptures talk of the four stages of life (Ashrama). The four can be subsumed under two - the householder and the recluse. The active social life is suited to the householder and hence Karma yoga; and a secluded life to a recluse, so Jnana yoga is ideal for the Sannyasin. (Saturday, September 26, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) True, there is only one duty, not duties, and we can't remain without doing this more or less. But, the question arises that, what is our duty? When we do not consider the material or physical body (as it is discarded sooner or later) the only thing remain is "Jeeva" or life, Atman, or self which is same in everybody. Thus, what is the

duty of the Jeeva or self? To be liberated , to come out of the bondage from the cycle of birth and death. One must do this duty at all cost, else the very cause and purpose of the human life is defeated and we shall not be able to unite with God. All other duties will be fulfilled if the life remains and if the life accomplished its prime duty of self or God realization.

With best wishes

Sincerely

ds

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The dynamic aspect of the Almighty

Thu, 24 Sep 1998 20:18:22 -0500

The transcendental Absolute which is posited as the Ultimate Reality in metaphysics, that which is beyond all phenomena, is God of religion. This is the eternal principle which guides the destiny of man and directs the process of creation remaining unaffected. The dynamic functions of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe are directed by the Lord's power variously called Sakti, Prakrti, Maya and Yogamaya.

The Puranas (ancient history books) elaborate the cosmological, ethical and redemptive roles undertaken by this Divine power. It is because of the veiling power of Yogamaya that the bonded soul forgets its true spiritual nature. Maya's influence can be felt in the working of the Gunas (properties or modes of nature called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas).

The influence of Yogamaya can be seen in the manner in which human life is controlled by two factors, Karma (result of deeds performed in previous lives) and destiny. The Lord in the Bhagavad Gita points out that it is {{only through devotion to Him that man can overcome Maya, ``This most wonderful Maya (veil) of Mine, consisting of the three Gunas is extremely difficult to break through; those, however, who constantly adore me alone are able to cross it." }} (1).

It is said that among the Puranas it is the Markandeya Purana and the Devi Bhagavata that elaborated the glory of Yogamaya who had from time to time assumed different forms for the sake of devotees. The episode in which the havoc caused by the demons Madhu and Kaitabha after they became invincible with the boons granted to them glorifies the role played by Yogamaya who was responsible for putting them down.

During the time of dissolution of the cosmos when the Supreme Being had withdrawn from activity (Yoga-nidra) two demons sprang

from the ears of the Lord and since there were only the cosmic waters all around, they did not know what to do and meditated with the purpose of finding out their origin. They heard the mystic sound of the Pranava and was blessed with a vision of Yogamaya who, pleased with their austerities, granted the boons they sought that they could die only when they wished.

Eager to test their new-found power they challenged Brahma (the creator) to a fight who became terrified and sought refuge in the Lord and His Yogamaya. The subduing of the demons at the instance of Yogamaya and Her glory is related in this context in the Markandeya Purana. This episode underscores that Yogamaya is responsible for causing both obstruction and also redemption from it by Her grace.
(Friday, September 25, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There are a few things a man can't do until blessed by the spiritual master only after he has steadfast devotion. Getting over Kaama, attachment (Moha) , and illusion (Maayaa), are some of these. People can control over anger, greed, etc. but not the above. However, as they get deeper and deeper in to devotion the master blesses them with the vision and they start perceiving the truth. As they see truth, only with the blessings of the spiritual master the Kaama, Moha, and Maayaa start diminishing until they reach a point which is infinitesimally small and can be called nil. However, this does not happen without the blessing of the Lord, therefore, one should seek the true spiritual master, just like we seek clouds for rain. Only through the spiritual master can one easily seek the Truth and God, and this is only possible with intense love, devotion and service to God.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Creation, subject to the flux of time

Wed, 23 Sep 1998 20:10:01 -0500

ARTICLE

Creation, subject to the flux of time

The entire cosmos is subject to the vicissitudes of time and hence whatever has an origin at a point of time has to come to an end. According to the Puranas all the worlds including the heavenly realm

of the creator (Brahma) are conditioned by time. The process of creation (Srishti) and dissolution (Pralaya) of the universe is a periodic cycle in which the entire cosmos manifests at the time of creation and is withdrawn at the time of dissolution.

In the context of explaining how a soul can obtain release from being subject to transmigration, Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita dilates upon how Self-realization enables one to overcome time. {{A Yogi because of his Self-knowledge understands the relative nature of time}} (1). The time cycle for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the cosmos is termed Mahayuga and in the realm of the creator, Brahma, a day corresponds to 1000 Mahayugas and similarly, a night also extends to another 1000 Mahayugas.

All embodied beings come into existence from the non-manifest condition at the beginning of the cosmic day and merge into the subtle body of the creator during the cosmic nightfall. Chaturmukha Brahma undertakes this function at the behest of the Almighty. This cosmic cycle is an eternal process in which the multitude of sentient beings periodically assume various forms. Thus the bonded soul is reborn countless times during one such cosmic day.

It is said that by elaborating on the process of creation Lord Krishna underscored that even the best of the worlds does not offer permanence. The analogy of a person retiring to sleep who wakes up the next morning in the same place is apt to explain the process of transmigration. During sleep the person is unaware of what happens to him and the world.

So also, the transmigrating soul at birth does not remember its state prior to coming into existence. So death is also nothing but returning to the same state from which one has come to this world. It becomes apparent that there must be a way to transcend this process of transmigration to which all created beings are subject to.

Lord Krishna points out that beyond even this non-manifest subtle state before creation is yet another non-manifest existence, the Ultimate Reality, which does not perish even though all beings are subject to decay. This non-manifest is spoken of as the indestructible, the Supreme Being, which is the goal to be united with, after which there is no more return to the mortal world. The methods by which this goal can be attained has also been elaborated in the Gita. (Thursday, September 24, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is said that the time a Yogi spend in trance or hibernation state is not included in his chronological age. It is true that the age is of the body and the spirit is not time bound. It is experienced that a short time one spends in trance during meditation is not felt at all, whereas the time one spends in meditation is felt very long. However, if this time is increased to at least 3 hours, (or days, months or years) it can easily be experienced that the soul is not time bound and the body can be maintained in same condition. A devotee on the other hand would like to keep himself busy in the service of God instead of going in trance or hibernation for a long time as s/he sees it as a time taken away from devotion and service to God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Liberation, goal of human life

Wed, 23 Sep 1998 12:15:43 -0500

Liberation, goal of human life

Human birth is the result of a long process of evolution wherein the transmigrating soul by its merit is blessed by the Lord with this form {{for the purpose of striving for liberation from rebirths. But, among the countless privileged with human birth, it is a rare one who develops intense longing for release from bondage}} (1). This is due to one's stock of deeds (Karma), both good and bad, acquired in previous lives which has started fructifying in this birth, which predisposes one to act in a particular manner in this life.

The life of Dhruva, the child-devotee, illustrates this truth. Spurned by his father Uttanapada at the behest of his stepmother who wanted her child to be doted upon, Dhruva who was hardly five-years old was stung to the quick at the treatment meted to him. His mother Suniti tried her best to console him saying that one must not entertain evil thoughts about others, pointing out, ``For a man reaps in this life the very suffering he has inflicted on others in a previous existence."

She instead diverted his mind by advising him to adore the Almighty who was capable of blessing him with all he desired. Dhruva intent on winning his father's love, immediately left for the forest to perform intense penance. Sage Narada who learnt about it tried to dissuade the

child saying that he was too young to undertake austerities but seeing his determination blessed him and {{taught him the method of winning Divine grace by initiating him into the Vasudeva mantra}} (2).

Though he was very young, Dhruva was blessed with the vision of the Lord because of his one-pointedness of mind within a brief period. Another Purana while recounting this episode mentions that Dhruva was one Vishnu Sarma in his previous birth who had acquired great spiritual merit and hence he was able to realize God even as a child.

Dhruva was speechless when he beheld the Lord and his heart overflowed with devotion for Him and the Lord who intuited that the child wanted to extol Him but knew not how to, touched his cheeks with His conch, which is considered to be the concrete form of the Vedas. He was instantly blessed with spiritual knowledge and sang the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord granted his heartfelt desire and also a permanent place in the Divine abode, Dhruva was not satisfied with them because with the knowledge granted to him he knew that he had failed to seek liberation from the Lord because his mind was still nursing the hurt of his stepmother's stinging words. (Wednesday, September 23, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It is true that the human birth is only given to us merely by the mercy of Lord God for the only purpose to liberate ourselves from the miseries of the sufferings from the cycles of birth and death. It is also true that only a few of the billions of people find the solace and peace after knowing the truth and devotion to God. All scriptures of the world vouch this fact, as said in Ramayan:

"Nar Sahastra Mahan Sunahu Puraaree, Kou Eka Hoee Dhrma-vrata Dhaaree;
Dharma-seel Kotika Mahan Koee, Vishaya Vimukha Biraaga Rat Hoee.
Koti Virakta Madhya Sruti Kahae, Samyaka Gyaan Sakrata Kou Lahae;
Gyaanvanta Kotik Mahan Kou, Jeevan-mukta Sakrata Jaga Sou.
Tinha Sahastra Mahun Saba Sukha Khaanee, Durlabha Brhama-leen
Bigyaanee;
Dhrama-seel Birakta Aru Gyaanee, Jeevan-mukta Brahma-leen Praanee.
Saba Te So Durlabha Suraraayaa, Raama Bhagati Rata Gata Mada Maayaa;
So Hari Bhagati Kaaga Kimi Paaee, Vishawanaatha Mohi Kahahu Bujhaae."

What it means is, Paarvati or Umaa is inquiring from Shiva -her

preceptor, "O Shiva, please listen, there are countless human on this earth, only one out of thousands of them may be righteous; among tens of million of such righteous people there may be few who are not sense gratifying and attached. Sruti (a scripture) tells that among tens of million of such detached people, only few may have equanimity and wisdom; among tens of million of such wise only few may be "Mukta" (a person liberated from the cycle of birth and death). Among thousands of such "Muktas" it is hard to find some lives (or souls) united with God. Of all these the most difficult and rare is one who is devoted to God leaving behind all his ego and illusion; How did Kaagabhusundi got such a devotion, please teach me, O Lord of the world."

(2) Naarada taught Dhruva the Vasudeva Mantra! Just like God is ONE and is known by different names even in one language -such as in Hindi, Bhagwaan, Ishwar, Parmaatmaa, Hari, Raama, Krishna, etc., and there are over 240 languages in the world, thus God has countless names; similarly the real Mantra is so small and is only ONE which can not be said in words in any language, yet it is known by various names, such as Vasudeva Mantra, Shiva Mantra, Onkaara Mantra, etc. The real Mantra is given to the soul or spirit, only who hears or listens. Although Naarada gave this Mantra to Dhruva when he was 5-6 years old, Naarada also gave it to Prahalaad when he was still in his mother's womb. Also the legend of Abhimanyu is well known, who learned how to get in to Chakravihyu from his father Arjuna when he was also in his mother's womb. Should this not be enough evidence that spiritual awakening can only be done by an awakened spirit -a true spiritual master.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Tue, 22 Sep 1998 12:43:53 -0500

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The following is an article edited for clarity and addition of emphasis on text put in parenthesis, such as {{...}} (1), followed by a commentary which is clearly separated from the article by a line of stars:

ARTICLE

Ignorance, cause of man's sufferings

{{The root cause of man's sufferings is ignorance of his true spiritual nature. Identifying himself with the body which is ephemeral, he mistakenly thinks that the afflictions of the body are real and tries to find solutions to his problems at this level. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna taught Arjuna the knowledge of the Self to remove his ignorance right at the outset after he threw down his arms refusing to fight in the war.

Thus the Lord underscores that wisdom is the panacea for man's ills in the second chapter of the Gita. Instead of trying to convince Arjuna that he must perform his duty without shirking it, that is to fight which was his duty as a warrior, Lord Krishna in the battlefield started teaching him the abstract truth about the eternal nature of the Self (Atman, spirit, or soul).

Chalking out the paths of action (Karma yoga) and knowledge (Jnana yoga) He explained to him the necessity to adopt them according to one's level of spiritual evolution. For Arjuna's edification the qualities of a man of wisdom were pointed out to him by the Lord. This He did to impress upon him that a man of wisdom will not have any delusions in life and will be able to face the vagaries of life without succumbing to them.

Arjuna's volte-face when the war was about to start was because of attachment after beholding the elders of the family like Bhishma, Drona and others on the opposite side. He tried to rationalize his action of refusing to fight with them, by saying that he would be instrumental in killing them and thus would incur sin. After listening to Krishna's teachings he was convinced that he should follow the path of knowledge.

Arjuna's natural response after listening to the Lord was to give up action because the circumstances were unpleasant. Though normally he loved to fight, in this situation he was confronted with the unpleasant task of fighting with his elders; so he was looking for an escape route at the slightest pretext. In the second chapter though

Lord Krishna dilates upon the path of knowledge in the beginning and the end, He discusses and stresses the path of action.

Arjuna's dilemma at this stage was whether he should adopt the path of action or knowledge. The third chapter thus begins with a question by Arjuna to the Lord which portrays his mental confusion, ``If You consider knowledge as superior to action, why then do You urge me to this dreadful action, Kesava?" The Lord resolved his doubt by pointing out the basic mistake Arjuna committed of comparing the two paths thinking that they were optional}} (1). (Tuesday, September 22, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Then there are other paths given in the Gita, and towards the end in Chapter 12, Krishna said to Arjuna that I promise and assure you that if you are devoted to me I will deliver you to the absolute Truth. The following verses from the Gajal Gita explains it clearly:

"Sagun Brahma Kaa Sugam Upaaya, So Me Tujhako Diyaa Bataaye;
Ygya Daanaadi Karma Apaaraa, Mere Arpan Kar Kar Saaraa.
Atal Lagaave Meraa Dhyaan, Samajhe Mujhako Praan Samaan;
Sab Duniyaa Se Tode Preetaa, Mujhako Samajhe Apnaa Meet.
Prem Mgan Ho Ati Apaara, Samajhe Yaha Sansaar Asaar;
Jinka Man Nita Mujhme Yaar, Unase Karataa Me Ati Pyaar.
Kewat Ban Kar Naav Chalaau; Bhavsaagar Se Paar Lagaau;
Yaha Hai Sabase Uttam Gyan, Isase Tu Kar Mera Dhyaan.
Phir Hovegaa Mohee Samaan, Yaha Kahanaa Mam Saccha Jaan;
Jo Chale Isake Anusaar, Vaha Bhee Ho Bhavasaagar Paar."

It means, "I have told you the easier path or way of worshipping the personified God having my form, with the name or word. Offer all your actions, donations, and love to me. Meditate on me devotedly and consider me your life breath. Relinquish all interest in this material world and consider me your friend. Overwhelmed with this love consider this world as worthless. I love you whole heartedly so surrender your self to me. I will row your boat and I assure you salvation. This is the supreme knowledge and wisdom. So now you meditate on me. I promise, you will be like me and if you follow this you will receive the same nectar of that absolute Truth, bliss and happiness which I have experienced." Thus Krishna clearly upheld the path of love, devotion and service to Arjuna after telling him many other paths.

With best wishes
Sincerely
ds

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Is it that the diesel fuel is cut off thorough a solenoid vlave, OR does it decompress the engine by opening some valve, OR does it cut off elecricity from the alternator or battery, although once started it does not use electricity due to its high compression ratio the diesel fuel is sprayed in atomized form in the engine and the heat of compression fires it?

It appears that you may be knowing it or you may research easier than me in this regard and I would appreciate it if you would educate me in this behalf. Thank you in anticipation.
Sincerly
DS

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Age-old values still hold good -Food for thoughts

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The following is an article edited for clarity and addition of emphasis on text put in parenthesis, such as {{...}} (1), followed by a commentary which is clearly separated from the article by a line of stars:

ARTICLE

Age-old values still hold good

{{Many among the present generation quite often wonder whether age-old traditions and customs are relevant today and whether they can be practiced}} (1). No doubt, in this period of technological progress, some of these values cannot be purposeful. But they were prescribed by sages and saints after deep consideration and those great men lived happy, pure and healthy life and were able to carry out their spiritual obligations. {{They laid extraordinary stress on food habits as man's behavior depended to a great extent on it}} (2).

{{Sacred texts refer to three categories of persons with respect to their eating. First, some people take food at any time, even during odd hours, at any place, whatever is given, whether they are hungry or not. Second, they may have appetite and so may stuff their stomach not minding the quality of the food or the person who gives it. They are compared to cats which stealthily drink milk preserved carefully, by jumping from a height, not concerned about the consequences. The third type will think whether the food given is pure or permitted by religious custom. If the food is forbidden, they will refrain from even seeing it. They will also be careful about the quantity and the time. Such men were in a majority in the past, abiding by customs. More important was the utterance of certain prescribed ``Mantras" before and after meals, thanking God for His mercy in having permitted to enjoy the day's needs. The food was eaten by squatting on the floor, wearing simple clothes, both of which were believed to help in the digestion of the same. A few seconds of meditation was also considered to purify food and water. Simple Mantras and hymns were taught to women so that they recited the same while preparing the food.

In earlier years, people got up from bed early in the morning and engaged themselves in physical and spiritual practices because the atmosphere was free from pollution. They would be brisk during the whole day and would retire to bed early. Health and wealth lie in our hands, counting on nature's treasures. These customs can be adopted by

all even now without any personal sacrifice.

So too was the reverence shown to elders who had gained knowledge and experience over the years. Many, even till recently, learned Sanskrit. Marriages were solemnized in the presence of Fire-God and any misunderstanding which unfortunately cropped up was resolved by adopting a give-and-take policy. The country has inherited a glorious culture which ought to be preserved and followed to the extent possible so that differences can be buried and peace ensured}} (3). (Saturday, September 19, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Age old customs and traditions may not be relevant or valid today in terms of physical world such as costumes, hair style, living style, home architects, etc. but in terms of spiritual world there is not a slightest deviation or variation in it. The breath still comes the same way as it used to, the number of breaths per minutes did not change, the spirit or soul is same as it was even before the earth was made some 4.5 billions years ago or the solar system, galaxies, and universe were made billions of years ago. Thus the life evolved through many phases but the nuclei of the life -the spirit, has not changes a bit.

(2) The modern science has proved, a little bit, that the food we eat affects our mood. Ancient sages knew it farther. They said, in scriptures and Vedas, that through a complex physical biological transformation of food in to juices, blood, flesh, bones, marrow, and semen (or eggs); it eventually, through a yet more complex biological, metaphysical transformation and subtle way, affects our mind and thoughts. Therefore, for an spiritual aspirant it is most important and essential to abstain from eating too cold or too hot, too old (too ripe) or too fresh, i.e., raw, too little or too much, too late or too early, food. Scriptures put all foods in to three categories -"Saatvic" -the divine food, "Raajasic" -the food which provoke vigor, arousal of vices, etc., and "Taamasic" -which make one lethargic, lazy, sleepy, sick, angry, etc.

(3) In "Karma Kaand" there are many Mantras, each meant for every occasion. There are Mantras for waking up, getting out of bed and touching ground, for doing every act of personal hygiene such as taking bath, passing urine and stool, so also for wearing clothes, drinking, eating, seeing lamp light in the evening, and many other Mantras for purifying food, body etc.

This weekend I happened to attend a so called spiritual retreat with a group of spiritual aspirants at one of the Monasteries in Kentucky. One of the attendees went to Mecca for pilgrimage and got his name changed as 'Hazi so and so'. He demonstrated that Muslims before praying at the Kaabaa or at any other place and time purify their limbs -hands, feet, nose, mouth, ears, etc. by doing physical actions of washing with water, or where water is not available they use sand. My question was that the body is full of filth anyway (inside there is blood, pus, urine, stool, mucus in the nose, sleep in eyes, wax in ears, cough in the throat, and saliva in mouth, etc.) and we can't do much to clean it from interior, then why not just take a good bath to clean externally before praying, instead of washing limbs only. Spiritually, the most important thing is to keep the mind clean with pious thoughts and feelings of love, devotion and service for God.

I have also learned that spiritual awakening must never come from the physical, mental, or psychological shocks, such as a divorce, accidents, a fire burning the house, etc. Spiritual aspirants must seek company of saints and sages of truth only to enlighten themselves rather than remedying social, personal, physical problems with relations, jobs, etc. That would defeat the very purpose of spiritual knowledge. We would not seek God, we would seek from God -the pleasures, comforts, mending relations, wealth, etc. This would not be a spiritual exercise or practice.

Similarly, in "Gyan Kaand" also there are many Mantras. Where as there is ONE and only ONE , Mantra in "Bhakti Kaand." This is that by which we know our own self -the God. It is relatively easier to practice one than many. The God is also ONE which is much easily and quickly pleased by love, devotion and service.

With best wishes.

Sincerely

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Seeking the company of holy men

Mon, 21 Sep 1998 13:35:14 -0500

Seeking the company of holy men

The term ``devotion" has been defined in scriptural literature in many ways. Examples of how sages, saints and aspirants, at graded levels, have practiced it, have been illustrated. Connected with the description of devotional exuberance displayed by such outstanding pious men are mentions about the distinguishing characteristics of

holy men and the benefits one gets from association with the virtuous and how the influence exerted by them brings about a change in the very outlook of a man who is at the cross-roads.

{{A holy man is always kind, free from impurities, remaining tranquil in happiness and suffering, is ever calm, detached, eats sparingly, dutiful, always resigned in God, vigilant, courageous in all situations, showing respect to all, friendly, performing duties as directed by divine commands and never considers anything as his own as they have been granted to him by God}} (1).

There are several types of spiritual disciplines but seeking the company of holy men results in cultivating detachment and the Bhagavatham (a Hindu scripture book) specifies many who have taken resort in God by the only step of associating themselves with saintly persons, as in their midst ignorance is removed, mind is purged of evil thoughts and an attitude of renunciation is developed. The Bhagavatham refers to {{the lessons which can be learnt not only directly from a spiritual guide}} (2) but from various creations of God in nature doing their duties as directed. Apart from the Lord's answers to a devotee on topics related above, {{the 24 sources in nature from which one can imbibe morals, enabling one to be perfect, have also been described}} (2) in the form of a dialogue between a king and a divine creation with blazing spiritual power.

Referring to some of them, it is said that the concentration was learnt from a blacksmith making an arrow unmindful of even the presence of a king passing by with his retinue; wandering without any need for a home from a snake which enters the holes of rats and to remain without fear or animosity from a worm that is constantly stung by a wasp by which it gets transformed as a wasp. (Monday, September 21, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) These are some of the characteristics of Holy men or saints or sages of the Truth. The others are saints will suffer but help others, equanimity, neutral -neither favor anybody nor oppose anybody, they have pious heart, they always look for other's welfare and benefit, they provide happiness when meet and sorrow when they depart or leave, celibacy, self control, clean living, righteousness, wisdom, detached and uninterested in worldly affairs, Yoga -united with God, eradication of discipline's sorrows, merciful, follows rules or do's and don'ts for living, generosity, being always in prayer to

God, contentment, patience, Truth, firmness, pardoning, blessing even their enemies, having no enemies, and they have no lust, no anger, no pride, no ego, no sin, no greed, no zealousness, no cheating, no fear, never ask disciples for any cash or kinds, they be happy in seeing others gain, be sorry seeing others loss and sorrows, they have guileless heart and are devoted to God by heart, words and deeds, they never expect self respect, they are respectful to others, selfless service, peace, never speak harsh words, always sweet spoken, and the biggest of all is that they will give everything including their spirit to their disciple. These are the few of many, actually infinite, characteristics and qualities of a true spiritual master or saint.

One should look for these characteristics in a spiritual master and once found, one shall adhere to his teachings until one accomplishes the goal of God realization. Unfortunately, if the master decides to leave his disciples before they get realization then we must continue in his teachings while serving the spiritual master deputed by him. If we do not know who is that, then we must look for those characteristics again before we serve the new master. However, it is utmost essential to have a living true spiritual master for God realization. No scriptural books, or any thing else can provide what a preceptor can. Hence, please seek the holy man, sage or saint of Truth and get the word of advice from him first hand, then embark on the spiritual journey to realize God.

(2) It is so easy to learn from one person, who knows the God, the spirit, or soul or self, and who can let us know simply by his mercy and will. This knowledge will be complete up to the extent our preceptor knows, because a perfect spiritual master knows it all, as said in Ramayan, "Jo Jaanat So Dehi Janaai; Janat Tumhin Tumhi Hoi Jaai", means, "One who knows can impart all his knowledge and on knowing YOU fully one becomes YOU.

One can also learn from many sources but, first, it is hard to pick up from these various sources because we do not understand their languages, and it will be merely our own answers to our own questions and attempts; secondly, why go many ways when one way gives us all. It was Dattatreya who did 24 preceptors (Earth, Wind, Sky, Water, Fire, Moon, Sun, a bird called "Kapota" who never stays at one place, Python, Sea/ocean, Kite, Honeybee, Elephant, Honey carrier, Deer, Fish, Prostitute, a bird named "Kuraari" who hoards or stores things, Child, Virgin girl, Arrow maker, Snake, Wasp, and humming bee) all from the nature -the creation of the God, before he could get satisfaction. The God was first, then He made the nature -so it is secondary. End result of all this hard work was just liberation

"Mukti" but not devotion. Some times, even after all this one does not reach in the domain of God because the God is ONE and we are getting its few characteristics only from various sources of nature, hence, we never get to know a complete picture. God has infinite characteristics and virtues, where as by going through various preceptors from the nature we satisfy our selves with a few and consider that as full complete, the God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Prahlada's deep devotion to Lord

Fri, 18 Sep 1998 10:49:04 -0500

Prahlada's deep devotion to Lord

Persons wielding power or those who are entrusted with authority should be extremely and doubly cautious in promising help or giving protection to others, because the consequences at times may be disastrous. The recipients may misuse the boon, granted to them by the former, to become a bane and commit rash acts. In such circumstances, the men who desire to accede to their requests should anticipate the consequences and seek God's grace. Scriptures refer to the example of one among the Trinity of God who was usually generous in granting the requests of those who sought them from him, being indiscriminate in one particular instance as the boon-seeker turned a tyrant and went about claiming equality with God. Ultimately, only the Supreme Being's intervention could quell him.

A God-hater, who after grim penance, obtained enormous strength, started torturing his subjects over whom he ruled. The boon he secured was that he would not die under normal conditions. He wanted everyone not to recognize God. There was no other way but to appeal to the Supreme Lord to intervene. One of the noble qualities of the Lord is not to get angry over such indiscreet acts of those whom He had empowered to fulfill devotees' desires, nor to chide them in the presence of others. He would only gently remind them of their hasty action. In the Ramayana, when the chief of the monkey legion was reluctant to accept Vibhishana as their ally doubting his motives, Rama diplomatically said He would like to give His views and judgment on this issue. Likewise, the Lord was not critical of Brahma's act of conferring too much powers on the king. The Lord assumed a special man-lion form and emerged from a pillar to kill him.

The incarnation of God as Nara-Simha was intended to translate into

action the words of the innocent child of the tyrannical king, Prahlada, who with absolute confidence and in unequivocal terms declared that God is "Immanent" and would surely rescue His devotees. God indirectly protected him when he was pushed down from the top of a hill or administered poison. But when the child was asked whether he can show the presence of God in a pillar, unhesitatingly he said "yes". His prayers were answered and God as "Nara-Simha" came out of the pillar. This rare form had to be taken because of the boon the King had obtained. Prahlada's devotion, was absolutely genuine, deep, unfathomable and firm unlike in the case of some pseudo-devotees. {{The chanting of the Narasimha Mantram, meditation on His glorious form and His worship will fetch peace and prosperity}}

(1). (Friday, September 18, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The chanting of any Mantra will provide concentration of mind and the result for which that Mantra is meant. There are millions of Mantras each one does its purported job but none of them, except the Word or Name of the God, give the vision of the God, and develop devotion and service to Him.

First thing, spiritually all people on the globe are same, i.e., the soul, the spirit in each and everybody is one and same; hence the Mantra also for the understanding and realizing the spirit ought to be the ONE and same. And indeed, it is the same. We know this only when we get the Word and realize it first hand ourselves. But people are interested in various different things hence there are various different Mantras for each of those different things. Such as, people interested in occult powers would like to have many Siddhies and the Mantras for those Sidhies are chanted and perfected. People interested in wealth will chant Laxmi Mantra, those interested in knowledge will chant Saraswati Mantra, and so on and so forth. Unfortunately, most people are only interested in getting something from the God and they are least interested in God itself. The big bang took place in the beginning which induced illusion in every human by which s/he forgot her/his real identity and considered the perishable body as her/himself. Hence without understanding the I in this body the body itself became I. We say I am such and such, in reality the name of the body is such and such. The I is same everywhere, but It has mingled so much in us that it is hard to separate it. It is separate but we just can't think the Truth so it appears same. It is said in Ramayan, "Jad Chetan Me Granthi Padi Gayi, Jadapi Mrathaa Chhutath Kathinai" means , "The knot between the

body and soul is false yet it is difficult to untie." It will not only be difficult but it will be impossible to untie because in reality the knot is not there. It is only in our mind. Go beyond the mind, intellect, and ego and come in the sphere of spirit and it can be clearly seen that there is no knot at all. Here is the need of a preceptor who has so called opened his own knot and who can teach any interested one to open his/her eyes and the so called knot. But there need to be an inquisitive, curious, inquirer with zeal, fervent hopes and sheer determination to know God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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God guides those attached to Him

Thu, 17 Sep 1998 08:43:24 -0500

{{The Divine Law lays down the requirements for man to lead an ideal life, getting over the problems and ultimately reaching God's empire}} (1). But if one person questions as to what would happen if he does not or refuses to follow its rules, the only answer is that he will have to pay the penalty by being made to take several rebirths and go through turmoil. Another person may ask what would be the prize he would obtain if, as advised, he scrupulously adhered to the same.

Whether one upholds the law or transgresses it is not a matter of business or barter. He will gain moral strength and face challenges without difficulties and receive the due rewards if he follows it. A politician who abides by the law will rule his country in a fair manner. A scholar will always maintain his balance and a businessman will never resort to unethical practices.

Scriptures show how God Himself, in His incarnations, and His chosen representatives have gained by obeying the divine commands. The Bhagavatham contains the Lord's merciful deeds and the benefits He showered on ardent devotees who never deviated from the prescribed path.

Devotees who pin their faith in the Almighty will be helped by the Divine Mother, who listening to their woes, recommends to the Lord that they be protected. In incarnations too, the Divine Couple remain united and the epistle She, as Rukmini, sent to Krishna, explains the poignant feelings of separation of an individual soul from the cosmic soul.

Scriptures also point out how tradition and practices differed between eras. Perhaps more than one marriage was allowed for men in earlier eras. Although Krishna was seen in various houses, He was found to perform different types of duties as envisioned in the Divine Law. In one house, He was performing certain rituals and in another was giving charity to people. Elsewhere, He was honoring Vedic scholars. It is said that the inconceivable feats which Krishna performed even as a child demonstrating the limitless powers that God-incarnate possessed in all stages.

How God guides those who are deeply attached to Him is seen by the various ways by which as Krishna, He planned for the success of the Pandavas. When His dependents got demoralized by the successive tests they faced, God deputized saints to console them. In one way, these trials acted as training for their future posts, as how to remain unruffled even under worst circumstances. (Thursday, September 17, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The Divine Law appears to be one which when followed we accomplish our goal of this human life. The goal is to know our real self or spirit, -the God. There is nothing good and bad in this regard. It has been seen that good believed to be at one place or one time is bad at other place or other time. Therefore, it appears that all those actions, thoughts or things which help us fulfilling our goal are good and all others which hurt our goal of god realization are bad. Putting all these in a law makes it a divine law. There are numerous examples of this. Surdasji, Tulsidasji, Valmikiji, and many other renowned saints were all very notorious for their actions until they were advised and guided by their preceptors, then each one of them became great saints at the pinnacle of fame and glory. It is a fact that I feel how bad I was only when I know the good. In reality there is nothing good or bad. Just the absence of good is called bad, like the absence of light is called darkness, lack of wisdom or knowledge is called ignorance, etc. So no body is ignorant, or in darkness, it is the magnitude which matters. In reality everyone of us is as powerful and wise as anybody else but all of us are wearing a varying degree of veil of illusion, hence we all appear different, though the reality is that we are not different at all.

It has been seen that God always guides those who have totally surrendered themselves, without any expectation or condition, by love and devotion. They are so much attached with God that God takes care

of their everything, just like an innocent child who is totally dependent on his mother undoubtedly his mother gets the thoughts in her brain and impulses by telepathy to take care of the child. It is a strange phenomena that everybody is so interdependent that no body is left unattended. That God is everywhere in every body. Some how some body is sent by Him to help the needy if s/he deserves so. Everybody in this world reaps the fruits according to their past deeds. Therefore, thinking this, one should go in the shelter of God -the Almighty.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Love for Sri Krishna is the ultimate goal

Wed, 16 Sep 1998 12:15:39 -0500

The spiritual tradition in India has formulated the steps which a human being can opt, for success in his life-journey. They lead him to the goal of enjoying permanent bliss in the Lord's Kingdom. The condition to choose the first path consists in the performance of {{scriptural duties, as service to God, without any attachment to the fruits. The second implies securing material prosperity, which should help him in carrying out the tasks mentioned in the above-stated injunctions. The third refers broadly to ``desire" or ``passion" or ``love" which may result in distraction from his religious pursuits if not kept under check. All the three, when observed in accordance with the divine directives, will take him on to the goal, viz. salvation}} (1).

When a person develops the desire for mundane objects, it cuts at the root of his spiritual development. The non-discerning people direct their hearts towards worldly pleasures while the knowledgeable do so towards God. By itself desire is not to be condemned but it should be turned towards enjoying the presence of God. Instead of showing {{`love" towards earthly objects}} (2), a man should focus it on Lord Krishna. This ``love" for Krishna is not just an accessory; it is the ultimate. The goal is to serve God.

A child, if intelligent and even if mischievous, can be tamed and trained to blossom into an achiever, whereas a dunce, although harmless and incapable of doing any harm, would prove to be a failure in life. A person with tender feelings and deep love for his wife can be made to sublimate his heart towards God. This was the case with a warrior who adored his wife so much that he could not brook her suffering a trace of sunshine and hence held an umbrella over her

head. Ramanuja found him fit to be transformed and he took this ``lover" to the sanctum- sanctorum.

Being foolish in respect of God is indeed the wisdom of the divine, born out of intense ``love" for the Lord. This ``passion" to reach God is better understood as devotion and is itself the goal for a human being. {{With devotion, we serve the Lord in this world}} (3). (Wednesday, September 16, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Scriptures just provide the experience of the writer which may act as source of inspiration and guidelines. Service to people is service to God. It is hard to worship any idol after one knows the Truth. Idol worship or worshipping any symbol may that be cross, or any other symbol like Om, <^>, Swastika, Navgrah-Puja, etc. are good only up to the point of escalating the interest in knowing the reality.

Just like children play with small cars, kitchen stove, utensils, and many other imitation toys in their childhood only until they grow old and find the real car, real life kitchen with real stove, utensil etc., humans pray and worship the images and idols of manifestations of God, the past saints, and various other noble man and leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru etc. until they realize and get to know the true or real life godly person or God. Once we know the reality we not only laugh at our past deeds but sometimes repent on it too. This repentance increases the longing for God more and more. The physical need of material prosperity is minimum and those who are lust bound must doom sooner or later.

Thus the service to God and devotion to God can not be performed towards some thing who we do not love. We can not love some body who we do not know for sure. We can not know for sure until we meet or are introduced with some one worth loving, being devoted to, and serving. Ramayan says, "Jaane Binu Na Hoi Parteetee, Binu Parteeti Hoi Nahi Preetee; Preeti Binaa Nahi Bhagati Didhaaee, Jimi Khagapati Jal Ke Chikanaaee", means, "Without knowing one can not identify and like, without liking one can not love; without love the devotion does not get stronger, just like without water the oil can not be washed."

(2) There are three kinds of love. One -the most inferior one, is love for material earthly objects. A person loving material objects, which are for all practical purposes dead objects -may they be automobile, houses, or any other fancy items, becomes a material

object full of decoration on his/her body. Other type of love is love for people. This is by far the common love found in few people only. Since people are alive, having a dead body and a live spirit in them, this type of love has 50-50 chances that people (having this type) may either become a lover of Truth, the spirit, or God, or may drift downhill, easy way, to the material love, love for body and other possession of spirit or self. They can be easily swayed in to the first category of love and become a material object. The third category of love is pure love, love for God, the self or spirit. This is the most superior form of love. Once having it, such rarest of the rare people can rarely, if at all, fall down to the first category. Usually even they do not fall down to the second category because they always look for the God, the spirit in other people. Kabira said, "Prem Prem Sab Koi Kahe, Prem Na Chinhe Koya; Jis Vidhi Saain Milan Hoi, Prem Kahaave Soya" means, " Every body says love but nobody knows the true love, the true love is only that which makes you one with God."

(3) One can not be devoted to an idol or any other symbol. Live people has to have love with another live person. We see it in our daily life. I love my wife because the God is in her, I love my son because the spirit is in him, I love my daughter because the soul, the life, is in her, I love my friend because he is alive; Can I love them when they are dead? I will have a memory of them but I certainly can not love them, they won't be responding to my smile or Namaskar/hello. I can not feed them the best of feast, I can not dress them the very best I did when they were with me. It will be my own imagination and thoughts that they are out there somewhere listening to my remembering them, they might be accepting my offering of flowers, clothes, food, and drink or incense etc. Thus the whole worldly people keep going in dark, in turmoil and those who knows this truth they cry at the pity of their fate. Kabira said, "Chalati Chakki Dekh Kar, Diyaa Kabira Roy; Do Paatan Ke Beech Me Bachaa Rahaa Na Koy" means, "Kabira is crying seeing the world being grind between two rollers of this worldly mill." But the same Kabira is rejuvenated when he finds the real devotee of the Lord who is attached to the God, and only God, due to his/her immense, infallible love, devotion and service to God, as said by him, "Thahari Chakki Dekh Kar, Diya Kabira Khilla; Vo Daanaa To Bach Gayaa, Jo Gayaa Keel Se Milla", literally it means, "Kabir is pleased to see a stopped mill and more pleased seeing that grain which went near the shaft was not ground to powder."

Therefore, we must pause for a minute, calm down ourselves, and think what for I am here? If I do not know who I am, what is my true nature, am I not wasting my time in knowing all other things? Am I self, the un-destructible, or am I merely a perishable body? Until

we know God by relinquishing all worldly distraction we can not find answers to many of such questions. If we are lucky and find some body who knows the answer the process might become little easier. Hence is the need of a preceptor and need to know the Truth, the God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Service to devotees pleases the Lord

Tue, 15 Sep 1998 08:22:18 -0500

There was a time when God, residing in temples, had spoken to some of His ardent devotees when pleased with their service to Him or to the community. On occasions, He had done so directly and on other instances through those who zealously attend on Him daily (during the worship of the idols). Twice, Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam and the Divine Mother had conferred titles on a reputed scholar, showering their praise for his outstanding scriptural masterpieces. However, the recipient of this honor had a desire that acknowledging his contribution by way of composing a hymn with 1008 verses during one night on the glory of God's ``Padukas" (sandals He wore in His incarnation as Rama) in response to a challenge, he should be known as ``Paduka Sevaka". That was Vedanta Desika (1268-1369) whose more than 100 works brim with philosophic thoughts and eulogy of Divine qualities.

``Paduka Sahasram" highlights Rama's mercy in having handed over His pair of sandals to Bharata who enthroned them when He was in exile for 14 years. The regime of the ``Padukas", with Bharata as the administrator behind the scene, was marked by all-round prosperity. The broad theme of this work indicates {{that life must be purposeful and obstacles ought to be crossed and the goal achieved}} (1). A reputed commentator on the Ramayana picked up the last sloka in the chapter relating to God incarnate's boyhood days as the best among the 24,000 verses though everyone of them was excellent. It brings out the core of the Visishtadwaita doctrine, viz., the Divine Mother's extraordinary compassion towards devotees, {{the Divine Couple can never be separated}} (2) and they readily grant asylum to those who are penitent.

Many saints have dwelt on {{the need to serve not only the Lord but also His representatives who have been deputize to the world as spiritual leaders. These guides act as links between aspirants and God and they should be honored and revered. }} (3)

Scriptures have elaborated how God has helped the human being in his life-time in several ways, important among them being the removal of the misconception that the body and soul are identical, or that man need not depend on anyone. The spiritual knowledge that he secures should reveal to him his master-vassal relationship with God.

(Tuesday, September 15, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The purpose of the life, as said in various scriptures, is to know our own self, i.e., to realize God. There are always obstacles when one tries to go uphill "Udharvamukhi" as against going downhill to destruction or what is known as "Adhomukhi". The purpose of spiritual knowledge is to recognize these obstacles and get over these to accomplish one's goal.

(2) How can the divine couple be separated? The Shri or Shakti is an important characteristic of God. How can one separate the fragrance of rose flower from the rose flower? The rose flower is known by that unique fragrance. Therefore, the Rama and Sita are not two different entities, they are ONE. The Sita is Rama's shakti, just like the devotion is to a devotee.

(3) The only need is there to serve the God's messenger or the spiritual Master. We do not know God; He is not seen with these physical eyes, but we see His manifestations. We do and we can see and know the spiritual Master who can guide us to see God. He can provide us the necessary "Divya Drashthi or Gyan Chaksu" divine vision when we are ready to see Him. Therefore, all scriptures of the world rightfully proclaim it that NO one and No one can know God unless and except going through a spiritual master. Jesus Christ said in Bible, "No ONE can go to my father unless s/he goes through me first." Ramayan is full of evidences to this effect, and so as Bhagawat Gita where Arjuna has to have the divine vision from his spiritual master -Krishna, in order to see the divine form of God.

Therefore, O' Learned Man, seek a saint who is a true living spiritual master and get all your doubts resolved. You are Naaraayan -the temple of the God, and then see the God -the "Nara", in this temple. The idols of God will then become a legacy of past saints or Gods.

With best wishes

Sincerely

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Unconditional nature of Divine grace

Mon, 14 Sep 1998 11:23:35 -0500

The Supreme Being is worshipped in different forms in the religion of Santana dharma (Hinduism) and there are six major faiths under which all other sects can be subsumed. Among them the Kaumara faith is that which worships Skanda (Kanda, Muruga, Subramanya, Kumara) as the Almighty. This form of God is especially important in the spiritual tradition because He is hailed as the one who taught the highest truth to His father Lord Siva. There have been a number of saints who have glorified Muruga.

One of the basic features of spirituality is developing intense love for the Supreme which extends towards his devotees and creation as devotion takes root. {{It attests to the fact that the Lord considers Himself a vassal of His devotee}} (1). The relationship between the Almighty and His devotee is a special bond which transcends worldly relationships.

The Lord's love for His creation can be experienced in His grace which He showers on His devotees even if they do make themselves eligible for it. The saint compares Divine grace to a mother's unconditional love for her child. {{The hallmark of spirituality is devotion to Guru (preceptor) because Lord Muruga is looked upon as the personification of the Guru}} (1). (Monday, September 14, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) The relationship between God and His devotee is that like the relationship between a preceptor and his disciple or devotee, or like a relationship between a husband and his wife. In spiritual terms, the devotee or disciple is (considered as) the body of the Guru and the Guru is (considered as) the soul or spirit of the disciple or devotee. Thus it is evident that there is no existence of a devotee without his Guru. That is why a true devotee does not have any ego, and is always full of humility and humbleness. Then only the spiritual knowledge flows to him and through him. When his love becomes so immense, the devotion and service then result in God realization.

With best wishes

Sincerely

Ds

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Guru's grace essential for realizing God

Sat, 12 Sep 1998 17:36:11 -0500

{{Guru's grace essential for realizing God}} (1)

Among the saints who were devoted to Lord Rama and had His vision, Tyagaraja is singular in that his spiritual experiences have been recorded in his Kirtanas which continue to enthrall and inspire countless people who are either drawn to them for their musical excellence or exemplary devotion. All the aspects of mystic life are well-portrayed in his songs. He was born in Tiruvarur where the other two composers of the Music Trinity were also born which underscores the sanctity of the place. He was named after Tyagesa, the presiding deity of the temple there.

Tyagaraja's father Ramabrahmam was a great scholar who discoursed on the Ramayana and at the instance of the Marathi king ruling in Tanjavur he settled down in Tiruvayaru when Tyagaraja was seven years old where he came under the tutelage of Sonti Venkatramayya, a great musician. His musical acumen was such that he started composing songs before long.

The turning point spiritually was his initiation into the {{Rama mantra}} (2) by his Guru Ramakrishnanda. He was soon blessed with the vision of Rama, as he diligently {{chanted the mantra}} (3) with faith. There are internal evidences to this in his compositions. In a Kirtana he defines the qualities of a Sadguru and refers to him as the one who gets rid off all the undesirable qualities in his disciple by his grace and blesses him with spiritual knowledge.

It is said, there was a traditional belief that Sage Valmiki was reborn as Tyagaraja. His birth was unlike other mortals specifically undertaken for the purpose of rendering the Ramayana in song. The original Ramayana of Valmiki itself is a Kavya and its metrical verses lend themselves to music. Lava and Kusa according to the epic sang it before Rama at Valmiki's behest.

Since the sage himself did not have an occasion to sing the Ramayana he is believed to have cherished this desire and reborn as Tyagaraja to fulfill his wish. There is internal evidence in one of his songs wherein Tyagaraja explicitly mentions the names of all the sages and rishis of yore but does not mention Valmiki's name, the important sage who rendered the Ramayana which is revered as the Veda, probably indicating his identity.

In the same Kirtana he refers to Rama and Sita as his parents and identifies his relationship with all the persons mentioned in the epic. Though there is no proper documentation about his life except what has come down through the oral tradition, that Tyagaraja's life and mission were extraordinary is apparent from a perusal of his Kirtanas. (Saturday, September 12, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Without Guru's grace nothing is possible in the spiritual world. With Guru's grace anything and everything is possible. There have been numerous instances evidencing it. In Ramayan it is said in Balkand that before Rama was ready to lift the Shiv Dhanush (a celestial bow) he said, "Gurahi Pranaamu Manahi Man Keenahaa, Ati Laaghava Uthaaee Dhanu Linhaa;" means, "Rama bow to his spiritual master (he had already bowed to Vishwamitraji when the later asked him to break the bow) in his heart and lift the great bow"; then again it is clearly stated in Uttarkand when Rama returns to Ayodhya after killing Ravana and His mother Kaushalyaa asks Him, "How did you kill Ravana who was very strong and big?" Rama replied, "Guru Vashishtha Kul Poojya Hamaare, Inhi Kee Krapaa Danuj Ran Maare;" means, "The spiritual master Vashishthaji is worshipped by our family, due to his grace I could kill the demons." Actually without Guru some body getting a spiritual knowledge is just like saying some body was born without mother and father. Even God Himself had a Guru as said, "Guru Bad Hai Govind Se, Tinkhu To Guru Kinha" means, "The spiritual master is higher than the God (like Krishna and Rama) even who had the Guru." Also it is well known in Hindus that Rama and Krishna were the incarnation of God and they are considered by most Hindus as great incarnations, as said, "Rama Krishna Se Kon Badaa, Tinkhu To Guru Kinha; Teen Loka Hai Dhani, Guru Aage Aadhin" means, "Who is bigger than Rama and Krishna, even they had Gurus; the wealth of all three worlds is at the command of Guru." Even the creator (Brahma), the sustainer (Vishnu), and the destroyer (Shiva) had to have their Guru, as said, "Hari, Biranchi, Shiva Dikshaa Linhaa, Naarada Dheemar Ko Guru Kinha." John the Baptist has baptized Jesus Christ, Gabriel inspired Mohammed, a monk initiated Gautam Buddha, Naarad initiated Valmiki, Narhariji initiated Tulsidasji, Ramakrishana Paramhansa initiated Vivekanand, Raidaasji initiated Meera, and the list is never ending. Thus it is clear that Guru's grace is indispensable for spiritual knowledge or knowing God, as said, "Niguraa Kare Mukti Kee Aashaa; Mukti Payee Na Hoi Niraashaa." One can not emphasize enough on the predominant importance of Guru's blessings and grace.

(2) Rama Mantra; what is it? Is it chanting the "Rama-Rama?" First, a true mantra has to be universal which is good for any human in any language. Secondly, it does not have to be chanted in words and sound in order to be any effective. Sound is produced by a complicated phenomena where by the sound current drops down from the initiator, through mind and brain to the chest in lungs, where proper amount of air is blown upward again to the throat in the voice box, sensations from which then produce physical voice with the help of tongue and mouth. Therefore, with all these various organs involved there can not be any Mantra which will control or calm the mind down in order to have a reach above it to intellect, ego, and spirit or soul. God is beyond mind, intellect and ego. That is why Kabira said, "Saansa Saansa Pe Naam Le, Saansa Ek Na Khoeye; Kya Jaane Is Saansa Kaa, Aavan Ho Na Hoye" means, "With every breath remember Lord's name, not even losing a single breath; who knows this breath might stop any moment."

Mantra is one which is remembered with each breath, and not chanted vocally or some people even chant it with a string of beads in their hand. Kabira said about them, "Maala To Kar Me Phire, Jibh phire Mukha Maahi; Manavaa To Chahun Disi Phire, Ye To Sumarin Naahi" means, "The string of beads is moving in your hand, and your tongue moves in your mouth; your mind wanders every where, this is not the remembering of God" and he reminds people by saying, "Maalaa Pherata Juga Bhayaa, Gayaa Na Man Kaa Pher; Kar Kaa Mankaa Chhodi Ke, Man Kaa Mankaa Pher" means, "An era passed while chanting God's name with a string of beads but the filth in mind is not gone; leave this false show and start remembering God from your heart calming down the mind."

(3) Chanting of Mantra must be in accordance with the narrative given in item two above other wise it is futile to do that. I have visited with a 90 years old gentleman religiously chanting Mantra since he was a child and I humbly asked him what did he experienced which he would very kindly pass on to me if he is pleased with me and he said he is still trying. I asked him what are the probabilities that he would get what he is striving for. He simply replied me that he is trying and hope that he would get the light one day. Hope is very important which keeps the process running, else it will come to an grinding halt and no further inquiries are possible. Therefore, first, the Mantra must be correct. Simply faith in any mantra is not enough. Although there are millions of Mantra and they are all quite well and good, but they all yield what they are meant for. Second, the mantra must be remembered, call it chanting, correctly with every breath.

This is a very important topic, the SatGuru, Mantra and remembering God. Mantra means advice, Updesh, suggestion, a formula, and is commonly known as Word in English, Naam in Hindi, Tatva in Sanskrit, Shabda in Urdu and so on. One can not remember God with a Mantra

until one knows the Mantra, and one can not know the Mantra until one meets a spiritual master. Therefore, the important thing is to know it from a SatGuru, the spiritual master only. Then, once the Naam is remembered the form or Roop comes in mind, with constant remembrance of Naam and Roop love is developed for the Naam and Roop, this love intensifies in to devotion and finally service to the Lord. Then the spiritual knowledge flows smoothly from Him through you and we understand the mystery of life, the mortal body or universe, and the immortal soul or spirit. That is spiritual knowledge, spiritual knowledge is not quoting verses from Ramayan, Gita or Bible etc. The spiritual knowledge is one which comes from the spirit, what we call heart -the spiritual heart; Which is not possible unless we have immense love in our heart for God, and not for anything else, just for GOD and GOD alone.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Eulogy on the Lord and His devotee

Fri, 11 Sep 1998 12:19:39 -0500

Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana among the 18 Puranas has a unique status and enjoys immense popularity, and its greatness has been glorified in the Padma Purana. It was composed by Veda Vyasa and it is oft-quoted that the sage was not satisfied even after writing the Mahabharata and other works, and he wrote this Purana at the instance of Sage Narada as a eulogy on the glorious deeds of the Almighty in His various manifestations.

The epithet Srimad underscores that the Ultimate Reality is Sriman Narayana and that the Divine Mother is always present with Him in all His manifestations. The word Bhagavata denotes both the Almighty and the devotee, and this Purana narrates not only the glory of the Lord but also of His devotees, because it was for the sake of His devotees that the Almighty incarnated from time to time.

By reading and listening to the exposition of this Purana devotion wells up in the heart because one's mind is either absorbed in meditation on the Lord or on the greatness of His devotees which will only enhance one's devotion. The tradition of expounding the Purana to a group of devotees has a long history right from the very time of its composition.

It is said, both the Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana which is hailed as the gem among Puranas, were important to Vaishnavas. The

term ``Vaishnava" means not only one who is devoted to Lord Vishnu but also {{one who has overcome the Gunas (qualities) of Rajas and Tamas, and is Sattvic in nature. Such a person develops devotion and intense longing for God.}} (1)

In an interlude in the Purana, Sage Sukadevji lauds Pareekshit for having developed Sattvic quality by listening to its narration, "...as a sequel to which lasting devotion to the story of Lord Vasudeva has sprung up in your heart. An inquiry concerning the story of Lord Vasudeva indeed purifies all the three persons, viz., the reciter, the interlocutor and the audience."

The difference between this and the Vishnu Purana is in the manner of their treatment of the subject matter. In his commentary on the Vishnu Sahasranama in which Sankara quotes extensively from the Vishnu Purana, he notes that this Purana expounds philosophical concepts directly. Even though the same concepts are explained in the Bhagavata Purana also, {{the emphasis throughout is on devotion.}} (2)

The Bhagavata Purana is also known as Paramahansa Samhita indicating that it is an important text even for those who have renounced the world (Sannyasin). The last two cantos of the Purana are very philosophical in nature. (Friday, September 11, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) True, such a person develops intense longing for God; but the God is beyond all three Gunas, hence one has to be beyond these to know Him or get Him. In Ramayan it is stated, "Teeni Avasthaa Teeni Guna, Tehi Kapaasa Ten Kaadhi; Tool Tureeya Sanvaari Puni, Baatee Kare Sugaadhi", means, "Go beyond three states (viz. Jaagrat or awakened state, Svapna or dream state, and Sushapti or deep sleep state of life) and three Gunas (viz. Sat-guna, Raj-guna, Tam-guna) or properties of Jeeva or life, in to the fourth state, known as Turiyaa (i.e., a balance of three states such that each nullifies other and similarly for gunas also), for obtaining just a glimpse of God to have only liberation by the path of knowledge or Gyan marg." In spite of all this yet the devotion is not obtained, as there is no love and service involved in knowledge. When Meera was asked how did she get God, she replied, "Ye To Aavat Prem Ke Mol", means, "The God is only seen by love and Love alone." Thus a devotee of God, sincerely seeking the God only, must be above all three Gunas for God realization. Then s/he sees God inside his own body and the devotee gets self realization.

(2) Take any scriptures of the world, may it be Koran, Bible, Buddha Granth, or many of the hundreds of Hindu's scriptures, known as Vedas, Up-Vedas, many Puranas, Sanhitaas, Smratees, Shrutis, Yoga-Sutras, etc. and practically any and all of these scriptures says only one thing DEVOTION, starting through Love and ending in to service to God. Go through any path, whether Karma, Gyan or Jnana, Saankhaya, Raj Yoga, Hath Yoga, etc. it will sooner or later culminate in to the Love, devotion and service to God.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Ignorance, cause of man's sorrows

Thu, 10 Sep 1998 12:16:50 -0500

Scriptural texts deal with two fundamental concepts which are basic to all theistic philosophies -the goal to be attained and the method by which the goal can be realized. All Vedantic schools are in agreement that the Absolute (God) is the goal to be pursued by man though they differ with regard to the relationship between the souls, world and the Absolute. The Bhagavad Gita which occurs in the Mahabharata is one of the three scriptural sources of Vedanta and all the preceptors have commented on it. It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Krishna, who donned the mantle of a preceptor, and Arjuna -the disciple.

The Kaurava and the Pandava armies were ready for battle and the Lord had assumed the role of Arjuna's charioteer, when all of a sudden Arjuna refused to fight on the pretext that he did not want to be the cause of the death of all the elders. He further reasoned that he would not be able to enjoy ruling the kingdom won after killing all of them. It is in this context that the Lord commenced his teachings and hence it is necessary to understand the reason for Arjuna's volte-face.

It was not as if Arjuna had not fought before; he was a great warrior. The Lord understood Arjuna's confusion and hence without directly telling him to fight, taught him the highest philosophical truth to dispel his doubts. The opening remark of Lord Krishna portrays Arjuna's mental dilemma, ``Arjuna, you grieve over those who should not be grieved for and yet speak like the learned; {{wise men do not sorrow over the dead or the living}} (1)."

In discourses on the Bhagavad Gita it is said, the Lord's remark underscores the fact that Arjuna did not have Self- knowledge. If he had certain knowledge that the body was different from the Self (Atman

or soul) and that the Self was indestructible he would not have had any misgivings about fighting. The Lord commenced his teaching thus, "In fact, there was never a time when I was not, or when you or these kings were not. Nor is it a fact that hereafter we shall cease to be." The commentaries on the Gita expound their respective philosophical standpoints at the outset, for this verse.

Arjuna's dilemma is similar to man's predicament engrossed as he is in worldly life without the discriminating capacity to {{pursue the spiritual end which is the goal of human life}} (2). So, through Arjuna it is to the entire humanity that the Lord teaches the highest philosophical truth. The most important step in this direction is to practice {{the duties}} (3) enjoined in the scriptures according to one's station in life. The Lord discusses this elaborately under Karma Yoga. (Thursday, September 10, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Wise men are those who are one with the God, they merge their identity in God, they see the indestructible self or spirit in all, thus they do not grieve for perishable body. Most people who identify themselves with their bodies, are not they living dead? If yes, why be grieved over the death of a dead object. Actually, the very existence of the dead object is due to the presence of the spirit in it, then why not go after knowing the spirit? That will be to pursue spiritual knowledge.

(2) When every thing else, i.e., our possessions, relatives, education, even our own body, is left behind where from we got it, then the only thing remain is spirit. Therefore, the goal of human life has to be to know the spirit. There can not be any other goal. All other goals are as transiently as the human life itself. Wise men, knowing this truth, only practice Yoga to accomplish their goal in this life it self. There is no next human life until the merciful God out of His abundant bounties bless us with one.

(3) There is only one duty for us, which is to realize God. All other duties are the duties of our servants -the ego, intellect, mind, ten organs of senses and five gross elements and their "Prakratees" or properties. Let them do their duties and I must faithfully perform my duty. This can only be done by knowing the second important part of this equation i.e., the method to accomplish the goal, (the first part is to know the goal) through a living spiritual master and fulfill the goal while we are living. Of all the methods, the path of

Love, devotion and service is said to be the best according to all scriptures, saints and sages of Truth. Ignorance of this is no excuse and is the cause of his sorrows. Therefore, one shall have the beacon of light of wisdom to dispel the darkness of ignorance. This light can never be obtained without a spiritual master or spiritual knowledge.

With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Merit of prostrating before devotees

Tue, 8 Sep 1998 12:27:26 -0500

{{Merit of prostrating before devotees}} (1)

The practice of bowing down at the feet of elders and devotees is unique to the Hindu spiritual tradition. Likewise when the Supreme One is worshipped in His different forms it is the touch of His feet which is considered the most sacred. The scriptures relate that devotion grows by partaking the dust of the feet of the Lord's devotees.

This is highlighted perhaps best in the Ramayana where Bharata unable to convince Rama to return to Ayodhya instead took Rama's Padukas (sandals) and installed them in the throne at Nandigrama and administered the kingdom on Rama's behalf. He used to submit all matters of the state to Rama's Padukas. What does the Padukas of the Lord stand for? Saints have shown that the Padukas represent the Lord's grace.

In the Srimad Bhagavata the incident of king Rahuguna receiving spiritual knowledge points to the sanctity of the dust of the feet of the devotees. The king was proceeding in a palanquin and a great sage Jadabharata was made one of the bearers of the vehicle. The sage was more concerned that no injury should be caused to any living creature on the road and hence jumped every now and then to avoid them and in the process the king was tossed about.

Enraged at his behavior the king reprimanded him and Jadabharata remained calm and replied in a manner which made the king realize his spiritual greatness. His teachings to Rahuguna includes this, ``One does not attain this (Self-consciousness) through asceticism nor through rituals nor by performing one's religious duties ... nor by any other means except by sprinkling one's body with the dust of the feet of exalted souls."`

Bharata requested Rama to give him His Padukas for the sake of the welfare (Yogakshema) of the citizens of Ayodhya. Thus this act underscores that by installing the Padukas on the throne Bharata ensured that Rama's grace would protect the citizens.

Another instance in which a great devotee of the Lord had a first-hand experience of the love and devotion of others so devoted, is that of the meeting of Uddhava and the Gopis. Uddhava had the privilege of being Krishna's close friend and he was not only a great scholar but was the Lord's devotee. At Krishna's behest he went to Gokul to meet Yashoda and Nanda, and the Gopis. After witnessing for himself their overwhelming love and devotion to Lord Krishna he exclaimed, ``Let me be born as one of the shrubs, creepers or herbs in Vrndavana, catching the dust of the feet of these blessed ladies and men who trod the path of devotion leading to Krishna." (Tuesday, September 08, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) There are all kinds of many devotees. Those who have renounced the worldly pleasures and are full time devoted to the Lord, these so called "Sanyaasis" Mahatmas or monks may be in a position of helping people spiritually, but other wise by far prostrating to all other devotees we will get what they have. If we realize the self and know that God dwells everywhere then prostrating or wishing any human is good. A true devotee usually sees that i.e., the God in every human. Eventually s/he sees God in His whole creation.

Touching of feet has a very important significance. The feet is considered as servants of man, it holds the whole body and enable the body to go places. When ever any body touches your feet your hands are automatically above him/her to bless. As per Bhaagwat, Lord Vishnu is supposed to be seated there. Also the feet has a big spiritual significance which a devotee learns as s/he advances on spiritual path. Tulsi has clearly written that in the beginning of the Ramayan, and the gyan chaksu or the divine light is obtained by meditating at the Lord's feet.

Hence out of humility one should wish everybody well and respect every body just because the same self, the spirit or soul, which is in you, is in them also.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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God's generosity is bounteous

Mon, 7 Sep 1998 19:06:58 -0500

The compassion that the Supreme Lord showers on His devotees is limitless. His qualities are numerous, His intellect incomparable, His valor unrivaled and His generosity bounteous. Because of these glorious traits, God acts as man's inseparable companion, a close relative and an intimate friend, as the occasion warrants. This cannot be refuted but still, it is curious that men, blind to these facts, approach other human beings or believe in their kith and kin to help them in times of distress.

Those who may have certain doubts about Divinity's excellencies, can get them cleared by seeking the guidance of a spiritual leader, whom God has specially chosen. They possess the capacity not only to dispel darkness in the minds of persons but also remove their ignorance. Virtuous souls find solace amidst such divine representatives (called Gurus) when they need it or when they are not in a position to solve knotty problems. {{Such enlightened persons will interpret the spiritual passages correctly}} (1) and help them in gaining the right type of spiritual vision.

{{The merits and the vast amount of scholarship of such guides can be gauged by the conduct of disciples trained by them}} (2). The knowledge so gained will make them firmly believe in the dispensation of the Almighty and the hierarchy of His servants. An important factor to be remembered is that the Divinity and His consorts are ever pure, even during incarnations. As God Vayu (wind), the Supreme Being, keeps track of the activities of millions of individual souls, causes them to perform their duties in a proper manner, at the stipulated time, and to reap the consequences in accordance with divine dispensation.

It is said God Vayu possessed 32 matchless characteristic features. Those devoted to this god should submit their bodies, thoughts, words and deeds and should offer only those approved food items during daily worship. Why such offerings at all, one may ask. This act of obeisance will remind the devotees of God's munificence and how as a bestower, He has been so kind to humanity. If the mind can be likened to a computer, man's words are the compact discs, the Almighty is the manufacturer and the body is the ``opener" responsible for projection on the screen. This process of nature has been ordained by God. While computers may dispense with workforce, in the divine regime, there will be no retrenchment. God ordains, guides, and rescues from veritable quagmire of worldly attractions and protects men when they surrender themselves before Him. (Monday, September 07, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) This is true. Most scriptures were written by saints and sages of Truth, they had written their experience choosing different casts and characters. Some of them have written straight, but by far no one wrote their own experience in their own name, that will just be boasting. And we all know, "Self praise is no recommendation." Also most saints have written during their life time but never published it themselves. They were kept in their custody to be given at their will to their disciple with instructions, who have published it after they passed away. It is therefore, hard for common men like us to understand their intricate meaning and interpretation, specially the sentiments and emotions the saint wants to convey. Since the author is not around to be asked, next best choice is another saint, usually our preceptor. Only they can give correct interpretation and meaning of scriptures. They may not provide a scholarly answer which does not have much use anyway but they would get the central point and explain it in their own experience which is easily assimilated. One of the Mahatma used to tell, "Sant Likhe Hain Grantha, Arth Karat Hain Grahastha", means, "Saints have written the scriptures and the ordinary persons interpret it." Will they be able to get it? The spiritual world (Ruhaani Duniyaa) is different than the material world (Jismaani Duniyaa). Saints and scriptures are both the subject matter of Ruhaani world.

(2) It is said that "Before the arrival of the Nawaab Sahib his servant with his smoking pipe arrives." That means disciples talk about the glory of God in their broken words which itself shows that how impressive the master would be. We all know clouds are essential for rain and most of the time experienced people can gauge the intensity of rainfall by seeing the color of the clouds. It is a fact that the capacity of a saint can be gauged by the conduct and character of his disciple. The rose is known by its fragrance and the disciples of a true saint are like his fragrance. It is very interesting and it is a human instinct also that no body can remain without saying the glory of God even when they know a little, imagine what a person knowing it all could give or tell. Will he say it all elaborately? To say something in a nutshell is very difficult. Tulsi said in Ramayan, "Sab Jaanat Prabhu Prabhuta Soee, Tadapi Kahen Bina Rahaa Na Koe;" means "The God knows it all, yet nobody could remain without saying His glory."

Hence, everyone interested to know spiritual knowledge must seek a

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With best wishes
Sincerely
DS

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Bhishma, 'a man of terrible vow'

Sat, 5 Sep 1998 07:36:03 -0500

{{Bhishma, 'a man of terrible vow'}} (1)

The moral law, in its rigid practice in the past, had laid extraordinary stress on the proper utilization of property (in any form) assigned for charitable causes. Any impropriety or misuse by anyone resulted in capital punishment for the culprit who had misappropriated it. Hence people were extremely vigilant and cautious in handling such trusts willed by philanthropists, or left intestate endowed for specific purposes, intended only for public good. An instance in our scriptural literature refers to the manner in which a man who was given a boat to ferry people across a river free of charge, collected money from them contrary to the donor's wish. After inquiry, he was duly awarded the stringent punishment. As an act of atonement for the sin committed by him, his two wives stationed themselves on either bank of the river, attending to the comforts of the travelers.

The king of the land, in which such strict enforcement of law was being administered, wanted to marry a woman from such a community which adhered to the legal provisions. But a condition was laid by the father of the bride that only the child born to her through him should be his successor. To enable the king to have his desire fulfilled, the son, through his first wife, who indeed should legitimately adorn the throne, made a sacrifice, for which there is hardly any other example in religious history, so that the son of his step-mother alone would be the future ruler and that he himself would remain a celibate to ensure that even by chance none would lay a claim to the post. This grim determination was hailed by celestials by showering on him praise

and the title as "man of terrible vow" (Bhishma). His decision never to get married was spontaneous indicating the essential hallmark of a leader (in any field) and he proved his distinction by playing a dominant role in the epic, the Mahabharata.

It shows the emphasis on the duty of a father and the responsibilities of a son. "To see their children wiser than they, makes the parents' heart overflow with delight" and "The son owes a debt of duty to his father - to make the world admire by what penance the father got this bright ward" are the relevant couplets. Bhishma stood by his vow in spite of tempting offers and he gave up honors and the coveted post and refused to marry even when his step-mother suggested to do so, to maintain the progeny. He lived an uncompromising austere life required of a bachelor. In return for his sacrifice, the king (his father) had granted him a boon that death would approach him only when he wanted to quit this world. (Saturday, September 05, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Bhishma was a disciple of ParashuRam. He was his staunch devotee. This was his greatest quality. Due to this, he even defeated his spiritual master when he fought with him, of course with his permission.

People are devoted to many things, but essentially, there are only four types of devotion. These are devotion to one's spiritual master (Guru-bhakti), to mother (Matra-bhakti), to father (Pita-bhakti) and to one's country (Raj-bhakti). The most superior among these is the Guru-bhakti, then comes the Matra-bhakti, then the Pitra-bhakti, and lastly is Raj-bhakti. Similarly, there are four types of devotees -Gyaani, Jigyasu, Aarta, and Artharthi (i.e., one who is the knower of God, one who is keen to know God, one who only remembers God when in distress, and lastly the one who always wants some thing from God and remembers Him then only, respectively). They are all good but a Gyani is superior than Jigyasu and Jigyasu is higher than an Aarta, who is higher than the Artharthi.

In Mahaabhaarata, Bhishma was devoted to his father and ParasuRamji -his spiritual master, where as ParasuRamji himself was only devoted to his mother and father; hence Bhishma (also known as Bhishma-Pita-Maha, being the senior most in age) defeated ParasuRamji when the later challenged him to fight with him. Bhishma sought permission from his spiritual master although the later ordered him .
OBEDIENCE IS THE BEST SERVICE (Aagya Sam Nahi Seva Gosain -Ramayan)

and Bhishma was obedient to his spiritual master -ParasuRamji. Bhishma's devotion to his father got him a boon "Var" that he will die of his own will only. Thus Bhishma did not die until the end of Mahaabhaarata at his will. Pandavas were devoted to their mother -Kunti (they were so much obedient that they even shared Draupadi), where as Kauravas were first devoted to their father, who was very selfish, hence Kauravas later fell from that devotion too. Thus they were defeated and killed by Pandavas. Karn was devoted to only Raj-bhakti -to Duryodhan who made him the king of Anga Pradesh -a state out of Duryodhan's kingdom. Hence Karna was killed by Matra-bhakta Arjuna. Mordhawaj was a staunch devotee of his spiritual master, therefore, even Krishna himself told to Arjuna, "Even if there are 100 Krishna like me, they can not defeat Mordhawaj." This is the importance and value of Guru-bhakti.

Earlier in Treta Yug, Rama had all four types of devotion. Ramayan is full of descriptions of all these four types, however, it ponders around Tulsi's experience of his devotion to his spiritual master (just like this person is trying to narrate his experience in these broken words). He starts Ramayan with, "Bandau Guru Pad Kanj, Kripaa Sindhu Nar Roop Hari", means, "I, kanj -the downtrodden, bow down to the lotus feet of my master, who is the ocean of mercy, blessing, and kindness, and who is God in human form"; and writes everywhere the glory of his God or Raam. Similarly, the Gita -the experience of VedVyasji, who saw the Lord in his own body.

Who could be such who would not like such a devotion? It is the fruit of Love and it inculcate service to God -the Sat-Chitta-Aanand.

With best wishes
Sincerely
Ds

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Four stages of human life

Fri, 4 Sep 1998 12:12:42 -0500

The philosophy and ethics of Hinduism have remarkably divided man's activities during his stay in this world into four stages. In the first, as a boy he takes to study under a teacher when he gets disciplined and learns obedience, knows how to conduct himself and remains self-controlled by virtue of the guidance and training. There is no dissipation of energy nor distraction while on the other hand he preserves it and hence develops concentration. In the second, he marries according to tradition, runs a family and a happy home. His duties are governed by the Law of Righteousness. In this connection, an example will illustrate how he should lead his life. In the

Ramayana, when the demon king tried to coax Sita to yield to his desire, she reminded him of the several charming women in his harem.

In the third, the man adopts a relaxed attitude and hands over responsibilities to his children and grows with them. {{In the final stage, he forgets about his earnings and property, concentrates on equipping himself with spiritual knowledge by reading scriptures, visiting temples and sacred places and finding peace and cultivating total faith in God.}} (1) In the Ramayana, the hero {{ Rama (the God-incarnate) goes through the first stage under sages, mainly Viswamitra and receives many "Mantras" while accompanying him on a tough assignment of overpowering the demons. The efficacy of the Mantra imparted to Rama was that hunger, fatigue and disease dare not approach its reciter.}} (2)

{{The Mantra which carries with it the great potency must be taught by a qualified spiritual preceptor who should have himself acquired with great powers by meditating and chanting on it. }} (3)

It is said that the Law of Righteousness ensures that when there is a problem, God will also provide a solution. Under Dasaratha's regime, all were happy and contented. At this juncture, he desired that his four sons should get married. It was then that Sage Viswamitra unexpectedly made his appearance in his court and was received with all courtesy. In this connection, it may often be found that most of us welcome visitors with all enthusiasm and at once ask them ``What should be done". It is necessary to remember to be humble and tell them that we will ``try" to fulfill what they need and not give forthwith a firm assurance. Viswamitra's request to send Rama with him upset the emperor but the sage told him that Rama was an incarnation of God and an embodiment of virtue. At the suggestion of the royal priest, he agreed as it was indicated to him the good that would result out of this and that it would lead to Rama's marriage. (Friday, September 04, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) It was also said that the human life span is of 100 years in Kali Yug -the modern time. So, one can cultivate total faith in God and hence can find peace; but how should one read scriptures and visit temples, or learn spiritual knowledge?? At the age of 75, most people may not be able to see good and get tired after reading just a few pages of the scriptures, they do not have enough energy to walk to temples or mosque, as their knees give way due to degenerative joint

diseases, and most certainly with fading memory their interest to learn spiritual knowledge fades away. Moreover, who knows individual's Karma whether that old age or fourth stage may come at 75 or 30 or ?.

Therefore, aspirants of spiritual knowledge must start learning it, practicing it and mastering it at any age when ever they can get the chance or kick, may that be at very young age. SanatKumaras knew it at birth, Dhruva knew it at 6 years age, Prahalad at 15, Gautam Buddha and Christ in 20s, Mohammed in late 30s or early f40s, and so on. So we must wake up and believe in our own self rather than the common thinking that only old age is for knowing God -which is something so important. It is a myth, to our loss, to postpone doing noble things if we really want to do these. There is a saying, "Kaal Kare So Aaj Kar, Aaj Kare So Abhee; Pal Me Pralaya Hoyegaa, Bahuri Karegaa Kabhee", means, "What you have to do tomorrow, do it today and what you have to do today, do it now; any moment this world will come to an end, then you will have many things (which you have postpone to do later) and you will never be able to do all those in a moment." They also say, "Delay tends to denial". When we don't want to do something we say we will do it later. We actually just bluff ourselves.

(2) This is worldly knowledge or skill just to make a living. People do it by studying science, mathematics, dental, or engineering, medicine, etc. This is may be desirable or even essential but not indispensable for spiritual growth. Everybody has some or the other skill. God never makes waste. Even some body's waste is other's wealth. A potter man or black smith also live their life just like a doctor, or engineer or scientist, etc. , they have children, they marry them, they get old and die. They do exactly all those things which other living being do.

(3) This knowledge -the spiritual knowledge, is indispensable for any individual who aspire to get free from the cycle of birth and death, who wants to know the Truth, the mechanism in which this whole universe is functioning, the supreme being, the all mighty omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God. The Royal priest of Rama was Brahma-rishi Vashishtha; where as Vishwamitraji was only a Mahrishi, who was easily shaken by Menakaa, the Maayaavi dancer, yet aspiring for being Brahma-rishi.

Therefore, one ought to know that Brahma-gyan, the spiritual knowledge and be free from illusion, the Maayaa. That is to be Brahamagya or Brahman, the knower of spirit, the soul, the Brahma.

With best wishes
Sincerely

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Ramayana stands for noble values

Thu, 3 Sep 1998 19:07:37 -0500

{{Ramayana stands for noble values}} (1)

Discussions between wise men, which are bound to be at an intellectual level and concerning spiritual values, will surely result in great benefit to humanity. The questions raised, which will be out of utter humility, during the talks will be only to gain knowledge and the sentiments shared will remain indelible.

There may, however, be some pedants who wish to display their own knowledge (on such occasions). Some may try to test others' capability. A few may do so for humor. The last category of persons will be sincere and their dialogue will be illuminating.

Such an exchange of views between a king, who was cursed to die within a week and a sage was a gain to humanity in the form of Srimad Bhagavatham.

The doubts of a warrior right on the battlefield and the replies by the Lord in human form, have come out as a sermon - the Gita. Even the mind of a great writer, who had contributed enormous scriptural literature, did not fetch him total happiness and he derived peace after being advised by a sage, who acted as a spiritual catalyst, to write in detail about Lord's incarnations, with special reference to His stay in the world as Krishna.

Likewise, the views shared between a hunter and Sage Narada resulted in the birth of the mighty epic - the Ramayana - which is being read even now and will continue to be recited forever, though the events therein occurred thousands of years ago.

The Ramayana and its hero (Lord in human form) stand for noble values - renunciation and penance. He who upholds Righteousness at all costs is the ideal man. The scriptures emphasized on charity and it was held that a person should donate one-tenth of his income (proportionately) to someone outside his family. What will happen if he fails, one may ask. God knows how to collect it.

As regards penance, there is no need to go into seclusion. What is urged is to control evil forces like anger and greed which lurk in the mind, said Prema Pandurang in her introduction to a series of lectures on the epic.

Even centuries ago, the question of a person who possessed excellence and merits and who distinguished himself from others was put to Narada by Valmiki.

The 16 rare virtues were combined only in one, Rama (God- incarnate), and these have been listed at the very commencement of this divine poem. The first among His traits is ``affability" and the others include His knowledge of the subtle implications of ``Righteousness". He stood by it irrespective of grim situations. (Thursday, September 03, 1998)

COMMENTARY

Dear Friend:

(1) Ramayan does stand for noble values. However, where all the commonly known noble values culminate in to is known as God, and the place or object where Lord's house or His seat in the house, is known as Ramayan. Ram+Ayan = Ramayan, means the house of the Raam or God. As is well known "Ramati-So-Raam" , i.e., the all pervading God which dwells in every life in this world, but when it manifest in human form, such as Rama -the son of Dasharath, then the all pervading God personifies in to a form or human body and becomes an incarnation of God. Ramayan, thus stands for this human body, which is so sacred, which is so full of noble values only because of the presence of Raam or God in it. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to know, see, or realize God in this human body itself. Once a person has realized God he is full of all noble values.

Narad's disciple Valmiki and Narhariji's disciple Tulsidas both wrote 'so called' Ramayan -which is one of the Hindu scriptures or holy books. They have explained and written, most every where in it, the noble values and the glory of their Gods. These are epics written to jot down their experiences only after they experienced God. Valmiki did not write Ramayan until he saw his Raam in himself, certainly not while he was Ratnaagir. Similarly, Tulsi did not write Ramayan until he saw his Raam in himself, surely not until long after he met Narhariji in Sukerkhet. However, the Valmiki's Raam and Tulsi's Raam were both same, the "Ramati-So-Raam" although Valmiki and Tulsi were separated by some hundreds of thousand years. Valmiki was in Treta Yug, and Tulsi was just some 500 years ago, in Kali Yug.

Thus, Ramayan stands for a holy book full of noble values for common people but spiritually Ramayan stands for a human body which is the house of Lord (in which the seat of Lord is there for the Lord to be

seated) who is full of noble values. One is values read and the other is values experienced and embodied.

The hardest thing in any scripture is to get its true meaning i.e., the reading of writings in between lines or the feelings and emotions the author had and he pointed out to the world instead of a wordy, literal, linguistic, or scholarly analysis of meaning. This is simply because the writer has written it after experiencing and visualizing a spiritual phenomena or Truth, where as we -readers, read only what is written in language or script and try to understand it.

Tulsi said in Ramayan, "Tadapi Kahee Gur Baarahi Baaraa, Samujhi Paree Kachhu Mati Anusaaraa; Bhaashaa-badhha Karabi Me Soee, Moren Man Prabodha Jehin Hoe"; means, "Although my master told me again and again and I understood a little bit according to my capacity; the same thing I am writing in language and script, the way I felt and realized in my heart." Thus Ramayan is Tulsi's experience of the reality, the Truth through his master. Therefore, everyone must experience that Truth, the God in them -the Ramayan, the Narayan.

With best wishes

Sincerely

DS

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Religion helps one lead blissful life

Wed, 2 Sep 1998 11:52:21 -0500

Every human being craves for happiness and peace, but both seem to elude him. There is no scarcity of comforts in the modern world but still many who live with them do not enjoy tranquillity. Contentment and joy depend solely on the mind, not on external objects or circumstances. Both heaven and hell are created by the mind. Religion is the science which teaches a man how to lead a blissful life while still remaining in this world of diversity.

The role of religion is to make man realize the truth that the enjoyment he derives from worldly objects and pleasures is only a minute reflection of the infinite bliss which comes from within his own ``Self." That which gives happiness today can easily turn as the source of sorrow tomorrow. The mind can be compared to a pendulum. Like its incessant movement, the pendulum of the mind swings from joy and grief. The only way to enjoy harmony within, is to see that the pendulum of the mind stops swinging altogether. This state of perfect stillness is verily the essence of life.

Religion asks man to be alert like a bird perched on a small twig which is aware that at the slightest breeze at any moment, the twig may fall down and so she has to be ready to fly. Likewise, man is leaning on the objects of the world, which may collapse at any time. He can acquire wealth and enjoy life but should always remember that there is every possibility of his being deprived of the same. Religion advises him ``to understand that this precious life is not only to nourish your body but to evolve to the state of perfection." If a person leads a life realizing the ephemeral nature of the world, he can still embrace it without breaking down or losing all courage when difficulties arise.

In a similar manner, the diverse and contradictory nature of life and its

Winston Churchill once said " you make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give.

The following questions were asked by one of my friend:

- (1) When we get old and may not have energy who is going to take care of us?
- (2) When we expect that such and such relative -whether son, daughter, or someone else, will take care of us in our old age and they could not, what will happen to us?

These questions are best talked in person, however, here is what I think:

As I understand, old age is usually referred to a time period before death. Since death can come any time, any place, the people -who are present around us at that time, will take care willingly or unwillingly. May those people be society, relatives, kith and kin's, neighbors, government or social group, etc. Who will provide service to you at a future time is determined by the person providing service and NOT by you -the person receiving service. "Sevaa Kee Jaati Hain, Karaaee Nahin Jaati;" means, "the service is done, not made it done or ordered." One has control over himself or herself to do service, but not on the person who does service, else it will be a slavery, a selfish paid business of give and take, and not service.

My grand mother-in-law lived over 102 years and she had her only son and four grandsons. One of the grandsons happened to talk with me back in mid sixties and told me that he would not need any body for

last services to his grandmother because they are four brothers who can be pall bearers and his father can lead with the fire pot. Later on when the time came everybody else were present to serve his grandmother. Only he was no present there as he was out of town traveling and could not be even informed.

One of the spin off of spiritual practices is to have so much self control and deep meditation that one can go in to the infinite trance and leave the body at will. Such a man serve His people as long as He wishes then leave the world for heavenly abode.

Finally, why not we worry about this moment -which is ours. Who knows when we'll be old, where will we be then, and who'll be around us then, let alone who will serve us?? Would it not be a waste of time to think about things which are not in our control at all? Wise men think of crossing the bridge when they get to the bridge; the important thing is to be wise. Did we serve any body today? I would worry for that more than for my old age, and service.

(2) One should not expect, because that can be a source of your sorrows or so called pleasures if the expectations are not fulfilled or if they are fulfilled. In either case, you have a problem. The central theme of Karma Yoga in Gita is "Do your duty without expectation of its results."

Be in the company of Truth, and such and many other questions will be answered by itself from your intuition. Best wishes, may God bless all.

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One of my friend asked the following questions, which are answered in the double parenthesis in Block letters, like **[[IT IS OKAY]]**:

(1) Since an atheist do not believe or worship God, would he go to hell? Or would God punish him in this life or next life? **[[ARE THEY NOT IN HELL ALREADY? GOD DOES NOT PUNISH OR REWARD ANYBODY, MAN HIMSELF DUE TO HIS OWN ACTIONS AT ONE OR OTHER TIME, THOUGH HE MAY NOT REMEMBER OR KNOW IT, GETS PUNISHMENT OR REWARD.**

(2) But at the same time this atheist helps poor people, is honest, does lots of volunteer work, helps sick people, and donates his entire income for the welfare of poor people. **[[THESE ARE PART OF THE GOOD QUALITIES, THERE ARE MANY MORE ONE GETS WHEN ONE GOES IN GOD'S KINGDOM OR DOMAIN. SO CALLED ATHEISTS CAN GIVE THEMSELVES FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS, SAINTS DO. I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH TRUTH IS THERE IN THE LAST PART "entire income" OF THE SENTENCE.]]** Do you have to pray God to reach Him? **[[YES, BUT THE PRAYING M,UST BE GENUINE. ACTUALLY, PEOPLE**

HAVE LONGED FOR GOD BEFORE HAVE FOUND GOD]] This is a very complex question. [[YES, IT IS INDEED. BUT WE ALL KNOW THAT ANY QUESTION IS ONLY COMPLEX UNTIL WE FIND ITS ANSWER. PEOPLE WHO GOT GOD SAID, "MEERA KE PRABHU GIRDHAR NAAGAR, SAHAJ MILE AVINAASHI." MEERA SAID, "MEERA SAYS HER LORD (MADE) IT IS EASY TO GET THE IMMORTAL TRUTH, GOD." IN INDIA , STUDENTS FIND MADE EASY FOR MOST SUBJECTS (PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, ETC.), HERE THERE IS A SOLUTION MANUAL FOR MOST TEXT BOOKS ALTHOUGH IT IS KEPT LIMITED TO THE INSTRUCTORS ONLY. A PRECEPTOR MAKES GOD REALIZATION EASY BY PROVIDING AN ESTABLISHED WALKED PATH.]] Would praying God be sufficient to get salvation? [[YES, AND EVEN GO BEYOND SALVATION.]] Since atheist does lots of good deeds in his life but does not pray or believe in God, how would you categorize him? [[A GOOD, IGNORANT HUMAN.]]

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TO ALL MOTHERS and CHILDREN

Tue, 13 Apr 2004 12:13:29 -0500

Mothers are special. Thanks to a "Premi Dampati" who sent the original text. The commentary follows:

It is said, "Tavmev Maataa Cha, Pitaa Cha Tavmev; " So mother comes first then father, then all others. God is seen in them and they are all seen in God or due to God they are all important, but mothers are most important.

Guru Nanak Saheb said in Sukhmani, "Mother is earth, father is water, individual is fire, Guru (spiritual master) is Air we breath, and God is Akaasha and beyond -which is infinite. Another saint said, "Mother is heavier than the earth who bear our weight so long, father is our protector and sustainer, while God is our everything.??"

Thus the importance of mother can not be understated. One of the interersting thing we all might notice that when ever we are tired or hurt the first word we utter is He Maa, O'Maata, A'Baai, O'mother or O'God, We seldom remember father or anybody else that way.

Also in devotion, the devotion to mother (Maatra-Bhakti) is superior to devotion to Nation (RajaBhakti), then is devotion to father (Pitra-Bhakti), and the devotion to spiritual master (Guru-Bhakti) is the highest. In Mahabharat, Karan was a Rajabhakta, Pitaamaha Bhishma was a Matra-bhakta and GuruBhakta, while Arjun and Krishana were Guru-bhaktas. Also If you have noticed people are usually known as KoshilayaNandan Ram, or DevakiNadan Ram, Kontaiya for Arjun as he was son of Kunti. No body says PanduNandan Arjun.

The point is that mothers are most important. Jawaharlal Nehu told, "If you educate a man then you educate only a person, but if you educate a woman you educate the whole family. Children learn from mother a whole lot more than they learn from rest of the world. And most importantly

children learn from mother even when they are not born -like Prahlada was initiated by Naarad, or Abhimanyu learned the Chakravyuha from Arjun.

The original text follows:

TO ALL MOTHERS and CHILDREN

The young mother set her foot on the path of life. "Is this the long way?" she asked. And the guide said: "Yes, and the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning." But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed them in the clear streams; and the sun shone on them, and the young Mother cried, "Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then the night came, and the storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said, "Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come." And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary. But at all times she said to the children, "A little patience and we are there." So the children climbed, and when they reached the top they said, "Mother, we would not have done it without you." And the mother, when she lay down at night looked up at the stars and said, "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday I gave them courage. Today, I have given them strength."

And the next day came strange clouds which, darkened the earth, clouds of war and hate and evil, and the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said: "Look up. Lift your eyes to the light." And the children looked and saw above the clouds an everlasting glory, and it guided them beyond the darkness. And that night the Mother said, "This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the mother grew old and she was little and bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. And when the way was rough, they lifted her, for she was as light as a feather; and at last they came to a hill, and beyond they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide. And mother said: "I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them."

And the children said, " You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates." And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a living presence."

Your Mother is always with you. She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street, she's the smell of bleach in your freshly laundered socks she's the cool hand on your brow when you're not well. Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she's crystallized in every teardrop. She's the place you came from, your first home; and she's the map you follow with every step you

take. She's your first love and your first heartbreak, and nothing on earth can separate you.. Not time, not space...not even death!

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Wed, 3 Dec 2003 11:56:50 -0500

PLEASE DO NOT SPEND/WASTE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE IN DOING/KNOWING MANY SUBSERVIENT THINGS THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANY TIME LEFT TO KNOW THE MAIN THING -YOUR OWN SELF.

Madhu wrote:

Years ago when I first saw Hrishikesh Mukherjee's timeless classic Anand, I was deeply affected by this line spoken by the protagonist: " Babumoshai, zindagi badi honi chahiye, lambi nahin !". The words have lived with me ever since. They echo Oscar Wilde's words: "It doesn't matter how long, but How you live!" The concept of death as an inevitability is so ancient that it has been reduced to a cliché. We all know we are going to die, but for some reason, are unwilling to accept this fact. Deep inside our psyche is rooted the Idea that while death may come to others, we will somehow continue to live forever. And on account of this belief alone, we attach undue importance to material possessions by becoming selfish, vain and arrogant. The 15th century poet Kabir epitomised the futility of arrogance thus: "Don't be so proud and vain/ for the clutches of time are dark/ Nobody knows where it might strike, whether at home or outside!". Reports say that many of the 9/11 survivors are relentlessly preaching the worthlessness of material acquisitions and the importance of love and compassion for all. We become conscious of death only when it occurs in our vicinity and claims those who are dear to us. At all other times we remain in a state of blissful ignorance.

In Indian folklore, there's this story of a woman who took her debauched son to meet Buddha. On seeing the youth, Buddha told him that he had just one more day to live. The youngster was shocked, but knew there was little that he could do about Buddha's prediction. Having realised that time was so short, he clung to his mother's sari, and broke down. He wanted to meet all his family members, friends and neighbours before the end came. With six hours left for his death, he found himself lying on a cot, distraught and disillusioned. When just three hours were left, Buddha paid him a visit. The youth did not wish to speak to Buddha, but the latter smiled at him and inquired if in the last 24 hours he had lied or cheated. The youth replied in the negative. Buddha then asked him if he had stolen from or hurt anybody. The youth got irritated and replied that how could he possibly think of doing such things when all he was thinking of was death. Buddha gently patted his head and said: "Son, I don't know who has to die and who has to live, but understanding the ultimate truth can be very enlightening. While you became aware of death only in the last 24 hours, I have been aware of it for the last 24 years." Fear of death stems from our fear of seeing it all end, losing our possessions and being catapulted into endless darkness. Most people find it difficult to come to terms with their mortality; they prefer to believe that there is life even after death. But those who are in constant touch with their inner spirit seldom fear the inevitable. They believe in neither heaven nor hell; they also don't believe in the theory of

incarnation. Our stipulated lifespan is a mere 'blip' in this ostensibly vast eternity spanning billions of years. We must therefore learn to value each day of our life and savour it, moment by moment. All those who believe in hoarding their energy and resources for the future could take a cue from the insatiable musician who eventually rued: "I spent so much time in stringing my instruments that there was no time left for me to perform..."

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Mon, 15 Mar 1999 11:53:23 -0500

Some facts we already knew, others are new and interesting! The following is the truth about our country of origin. Read through them. The facts below were recently published in one of the German magazines, which deals with the world history.

- * India never invaded any country in her last 10,000 years of history.
- * It is the only society in the world, which has never had slavery.
- * India invented the Number System. Zero was invented by Aryabhata.
- * The World's first university was established in Takshila in 700 BC. More than 10,500 students from all over the world studied there more than 60 subjects.
- * The University of Nalanda built in the 4th century BC was one of the greatest achievements of ancient India in the field of education.
- * Sanskrit is the mother of all higher languages. Sanskrit is the most precise and therefore suitable language for the computer software - a report in Forbes magazine, July 1987.
- * Ayurveda is the earliest school of medicine known to humans. Charaka, the father of medicine consolidated Ayurveda 2500 years ago. Today Ayurveda is fast regaining its rightful place in our civilization.

It's the only system which takes the holistic view of the person being treated.

- * Although modern images of India often show poverty and lack of development, India was the richest country on earth until the time of British in the early 17th Century. Christopher Columbus was attracted by her wealth and was looking for route to India when he discovered the American continent by mistake.
- * The art of Navigation was born in the river Sindh 6000 years ago. The very word Navigation is derived from the Sanskrit word NAVGATI. The word navy

is also derived from Sanskrit 'Nou'.

* Bhaskaracharya calculated the time taken by the earth to orbit the sun

hundreds of years before the astronomer Smart.

* Time taken by earth to orbit the sun: (5th century) 365.258756484 days. *

The value of "pi" was first calculated by Budhayana, and he explained the

concept of what is known as the Pythagorean Theorem. He discovered this in

the 6th century long before the European mathematicians.

* Algebra, trigonometry and calculus came from India. Quadratic equations

were propounded by Sridharacharya in the 11th century.

* The largest numbers the Greeks and the Romans used were 10^6 whereas Hindus

used numbers as big as 10^{53} (10 to the power of 53) with specific names as

early as 5000 BC during the Vedic period. Even today, the largest used number is Tera: 10^{12} (10 to the power of 12).

* According to the Gemological Institute of America, up until 1896, India

was the only source for diamonds to the world.

* USA based IEEE has proved what has been a century old suspicion in the

world scientific community that the pioneer of wireless communication was

Prof Jagdeesh Bose and not Marconi.

* The earliest reservoir and dam for irrigation was built in Saurashtra.

According to Saka King Rudradaman I of 150 BC a beautiful lake aptly called

'Sudarshana' was constructed on the hills of Raivataka during Chandragupta

Maurya's time.

* Chess (Shataranja or Ashta Pada) was invented in India.

* Sushruta is the father of surgery. 2600 years ago he and health scientists

of his time conducted complicated surgeries like cesareans, cataract,

artificial limbs, fractures, urinary stones and even plastic surgery and

brain surgery. Usage of anesthesia was well known in ancient India.

Over 125 surgical equipments were used. Deep knowledge of anatomy, physiology,

etiology, embryology, digestion, metabolism, genetics and immunity is also found in many texts.

* When many cultures were only nomadic forest dwellers over 5000 years ago, Indians established Harappan culture in Sindhu Valley (Indus Valley Civilization).

* The place value system, the decimal system was developed in India in 100 BC.

> > > QUOTES ABOUT INDIA :> > >

** Albert Einstein said: "We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.

** Mark Twain said: India is, the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grand mother of tradition. our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only.

** Romain Rolland said: If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.

** Hu Shih, former ambassador of China to USA said: India conquered and dominated china culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border.

Here is a quote to ponder on:

"If you lost wealth, you lost nothing;
If you lost health, you have lost something; but
if you have lost character, you have lost everything."

Anonymous

COMMENT:

Unfortunately, as is usual, "The least important is most known, the most important is least known." Everybody knows wealth and health but only a few knows the character. The character of a person is composed of personality,

morality, and ethical values s/he holds. More particularly: It is speaking truth, being honest (to him/her self and others), not engaging in fantasy and sex outside his/her marriage, kind to people, being flexible, forgiving, keeping an open mind -others can be right and s/he can be wrong, loving and respecting people, hospitable and welcoming, soft and sweet spoken, gentle and free of anger, lust, greed, pride, ego, jealousy, envy, hostility and aggressiveness, hypocrisy, stealing and selfishness; apologetic, service with smile, zealous to work detached and selflessly, dutiful, responsible, trustworthy, person of integrity, brave, God fearing, and seeker of truth. Character is thus a complex blend, made easy in short by "love, devotion and service before self." True, if character is lost nothing is left behind, a person is a living dead, then.

+++++

Do what is Right

Thu, 25 Feb 1999 09:05:04 -0500

People are often unreasonable,

> > Illogical, and self-centered;

> > Forgive them anyway.

> >

> > If you are kind,

> > People may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

> > Be kind anyway.

> >

> > If you are successful,

> > You will win some false friends and some true enemies;

> > Succeed anyway.

> >

> > If you are honest and frank,

> > People may cheat you;

> > Be honest and frank anyway.

> >

> > What you spend years building,

> > Someone could destroy overnight;

> > Build anyway.

> >

> > If you find serenity and happiness,

> > They may be jealous;

> > Be happy anyway.

> >

> > The good you do today,

> > People will often forget tomorrow;

> > Do good anyway.

> >

> > Give the world the best you have,

> > And it may never be enough;

> > Give the world the best you've got anyway.

> >

> > You see, in the final analysis,

> > It is between you and God;

> > It never was between you and them anyway.

From: Anderson, Julie (NREPC, DEP)

Sent: Friday, January 22, 1999 8:08 AM

To: 'Anderson, Sarah'; 'Anderson, Carol'; Bridges, Paul (NREPC, DEP);

'Fisher, Kelli'; 'Green, Lisa'; 'Waldrop, Glenn'; Nagda, D.S. (NREPC,

DEP);

Mehdipour, Hossein (NREPC, DEP); Beykzadeh, Hamid (NREPC, DEP)
Subject: FW: FW: Morning Mail

Julie Anderson *

> Top 15 best things to say if you get caught sleeping at your
> desk:
>
> 15. They told me at the blood bank this might happen.
> 14. This is just a 15 minute power-nap like they raved about in the
last
time management course you sent me to.
> 13. Whew! Guess I left the top off the liquid paper.
> 12. I wasn't sleeping! I was meditating on the mission statement
and
envisioning a new paradigm!
> 11. This is one of the seven habits of highly effective people!
> 10. I was testing the keyboard for drool resistance.
> 9. Actually doing a "Stress Level Elimination Exercise Plan"
(SLEEP)
you learned at the last mandatory seminar you made me attend.
> 8. I was doing a highly specific Yoga exercise to relieve
work-related
stress. Are you discriminatory towards people who practice Yoga?
> 7. Darn! Why did you interrupt me? I had almost figured out a
solution
to our biggest problem.
> 6. The coffee machine is broke....
> 5. Someone must've put decaf in the wrong pot.
> 4. Boy, that cold medicine I took last night just won't wear
off!
> 3. Ah, the unique and unpredictable circadian rhythms of the
workaholic!
> 2. Wasn't sleeping. Was trying to pick up contact lens without
hands.

> And the #1 best thing to say if you get caught sleeping at your
desk:

> 1. Amen

Fri, 11 Dec 1998 08:30:25 -0500

It has come to our attention recently that many of you have been
>>turning in time sheets that specify large amounts of Miscellaneous
>>Unproductive Time (code 5309). To our department, unproductive time

is
>>not a problem. What is a problem, however, is not knowing exactly
what
>>you are doing with your unproductive time. The newly installed
>>Activity Based Costing Financial System (ABCFS) requires additional
>>information to achieve its goals. Attached below is a sheet
specifying
>>a tentative extended job code list based on our observations of
>>employee activities. The list will allow you to specify with better
>>precision what you are doing during your unproductive time.
>>
>>Please begin using this job code list immediately and let us
>>know about any difficulties you may encounter.
>>
>>Extended Task Code List Code # Explanation:
>>
>> 5000 Surfing the Net
>> 5001 Reading/Writing Social Email
>> 5002 Sharing Social E-Mail (see codes #5003, #5004)
>> 5003 Collecting Jokes and Other Humorous Material via E-Mail
>> 5004 Forwarding Jokes and Other Humorous Material via E-Mail
>> 5005 Faxing Jokes and Other Humorous Material to Friends not on
E-Mail
>> 5316 Meeting
>> 5317 Obstructing Communications at Meeting
>> 5318 Trying to sound knowledgeable while in Meeting
>> 5319 Waiting for Break
>> 5320 Waiting for Lunch
>> 5321 Waiting for End of Day
>> 5322 Vicious Verbal Attacks Directed at Coworker
>> 5323 Vicious Verbal Attacks Directed at Coworker while Coworker
Is
Not
>>Present
>> 5393 Covering for Incompetence of Coworker Friend
>> 5400 Trying to Explain Concept to Coworker Who Is Not Interested
in
>>Learning
>> 5401 Trying to Explain Concept to Coworker Who is Stupid
>> 5402 Trying to Explain Concept to Coworker Who Hates Me
>> 5481 Buying Snack
>> 5482 Eating Snack
>> 5500 Filling Out Time Sheet
>> 5501 Inventing Time Sheet Entries
>> 5502 Waiting for Something to Happen
>> 5503 Scratching Myself

- >> 5504 Sleeping
- >> 5510 Feeling Bored
- >> 5600 Bitching about Lousy Job (see code #5610)
- >> 5601 Bitching about Low Pay (see code #5610)
- >> 5602 Bitching about Long Hours (see code #5610)
- >> 5603 Bitching about Coworker (see codes #5322, #5323)
- >> 5604 Bitching about Boss (see code #5610)
- >> 5605 Bitching about Personal Problems
- >> 5610 Searching for a New Job
- >> 5640 Miscellaneous Unproductive Bitching
- >> 5701 Not Actually Present at Job
- >> 5702 Suffering from Eight-Hour Flu
- >> 6102 Ordering Out
- >> 6103 Waiting for Food Delivery to Arrive
- >> 6104 Taking it Easy while Digesting Food
- >> 6200 Using Company Resources for Personal Profit
- >> 6201 Stealing Company Goods
- >> 6202 Making Excuses after Accidentally Destroying Company Goods
- >> 6203 Using Company Phone to Make Long-Distance Personal Calls
- >> 6206 Gossiping
- >> 6207 Planning a Social Event
- >> 6210 Feeling Sorry for Myself
- >> 6221 Pretending to Work While Boss is Watching
- >> 6222 Pretending to Enjoy My Job
- >> 6223 Pretending I Like My Coworkers
- >> 6224 Pretending I Like Important People When in Reality They Are

Jerks

- >> 6238 Miscellaneous Unproductive Fantasizing
- >> 6601 Running my Own Business on Company Time (see code #6603)
- >> 6602 Complaining
- >> 6603 Writing a Book on Company Time
- >> 6604 Planning a Vacation on Company Time
- >> 6611 Staring Into Space
- >> 6612 Staring at Computer Screen
- >> 6615 Transcendental Meditation
- >> 7281 Extended Trip to the Bathroom (at least 10 min.)
- >> 7400 Talking with Divorce Lawyer on Phone
- >> 7401 Talking with Plumber on Phone
- >> 7402 Talking with Dentist on Phone
- >> 7403 Talking with Doctor on Phone
- >> 7404 Talking with Masseuse on Phone
- >> 7405 Talking with House Painter on Phone
- >> 7406 Talking with Personal Therapist on Phone
- >> 7419 Talking with Miscellaneous Paid Professional on Phone
- >> 7425 Talking with Mistress/Boy Toy on Phone (also see code

#7400)

>> 7931 Asking Coworker to Aid Me in an Illicit Activity
>> 8000 Recreational Drug Use
>>
>
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And the Lord spoke to Noah and said: "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water and all the evil people are destroyed. But I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am ordering you to build an Ark."

And in a flash of lightning he delivered the specifications for an Ark. "OK," said Noah, trembling in fear and fumbling with the blueprints.

"Six months, and it starts to rain," thundered the Lord. "You'd better have my Ark completed, or learn how to swim for a very long time."

And six months passed. The skies began to cloud up and rain began to fall.

The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping. And there was no Ark. "Noah," shouted the Lord, "Where is my Ark?" A lightning bolt crashed into the ground next to Noah.

"Lord, please forgive me!" begged Noah. "I did my best. But there were big problems."

First I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project, and your plans didn't meet code. So I had to hire an engineer to redraw the plans. Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system. My neighbors objected, claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

Then I had a big problem getting enough wood for the Ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl. I had to convince U.S. Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls. But they wouldn't let me catch any owls. So no owls. Then the carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now we have 16 carpenters going on the boat, and still no owls.

Then I started gathering up animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind.

Just when I got the suit dismissed, EPA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't take kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of a Supreme Being.

Then the Army Corps of Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

Right now I'm still trying to resolve a complaint from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over how many Croatians I'm supposed to hire, the IRS has seized all my assets claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country, and I just got a notice from the state about owing some kind of use tax.

I really don't think I can finish your Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the

sky.

Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked, hopefully.

"No," said the Lord sadly, "Government already has."

KENNA KING

Disputed Claims Investigator

FW: Horrible stories from Afghanistan
Thu, 5 Nov 1998 11:23:28 -0500

These seems like the factual happenings.

Is this really Islam? Does Koran says to punish criminals like this?

Is
this human values? Why only Afganisthan is being publicized and not
Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia, where all this has been happening for decades, just
because
Mecca and Medina are there? Does all this really make a state the
world's
purest Islamic state? Is it not defaming Islam and Moslem people?

Good Moslems should take this matter up with proper authorities in a
humanly
manner and resolve/stop such mishaps, and atrocities. That will be
upholding virtues and killing vices.

With best wishes and good luck.

From: Tabayeh, Mortaza (NREPC, DEP)
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 1998 8:44 AM
To: Nagda, D.S. (NREPC, DEP)
Subject: FW: Horrible stories from Afghanistan

From: Fakharpour, Sasan (NREPC, OIS)
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 1998 8:01 AM
To: Abbas Pourghasemi; Ahmad Allameh; Ali Daneshmand; Ebrahim Maleki;
Farhad Abad; Fazi Sherkat; Ghasem Pourghasemi; Hamid Beykzadeh; Hossein

Mehdipour; Massoud Shoa; Maziar Torabi; Mortaza Rabiee; Mortaza Tabayeh
Subject: Horrible stories from Afghanistan

<<http://www.hrw.org/hrw/reports98/afghan/index.htm>>
<http://www.hrw.org/hrw/reports98/afghan/index.htm>

KABUL, Afghanistan-When you're convicted of murder by the fanatic Taliban Moslems who rule Afghanistan, you don't just get executed-you get your throat slit in front of a crowd of screaming religious nuts who consider the death shows their only entertainment. In the last week, at least three alleged killers met the knife during public executions in this war-torn country, newspapers in Pakistan report. A fundamentalist Islamic "government" has ruled most of Afghanistan since late 1996.

The morbid events are the lone entertainment for fun-starved residents. Taliban leaders have banned music, dancing, television and movie theaters.

When the word gets out that a criminal will be executed or mutilated, stadiums fill with crazed Afghans, cigarette and popcorn vendors make a fortune, and Taliban riot cops have to fight off frenzied fans who rush upon the bloodied ground.

In the last two months, Kabul's football stadium has also hosted the cutting off of the hands of thieves, a public shooting, gruesome punishment for sodomy, and the lashings of men and women-events that all drew huge and enthusiastic crowds.

Eye For Eye,
Tooth For Tooth

On Sunday, an old man with a dagger finished off an alleged murderer in the town of Spinboldak, on Afghanistan's troubled border with Pakistan.

Hundreds gathered to watch the execution of the man, identified only as "Mahmood."

First, the doomed man endured a lengthy sermon, quoting the merciless Islamic punishment of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." Then, the victim's father was asked three times to forgive Mahmood.

Each time, the crazed old man screamed "No!"
Finally, the old man plunged a dagger into Mahmood's throat, while the crowd screamed religious slogans and cheered wildly. Some spectators fell unconscious after watching the bloody spectacle.
Taliban militia chief Mullah Muhammad Omar approved the execution following his Islamic court's verdict. The convict was arrested by Taliban police last year for allegedly killing a man named Jilani and snatching his taxi cab.
The hardline Taliban militia have implemented a strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia laws to stop crime.
Last Friday, some 30,000 Kabul citizens gathered in the football stadium to watch two men accused of murder have their throats slit by relatives of the victims.
Suleiman and Mehrajuddin failed to win forgiveness from the families of their purported victims and, amid gasps of enthusiasm from spectators and Taliban officials, had their throats cut by the relatives.
The two men were blamed for three murders in Kabul. They didn't resist when the Taliban cops knocked the men to the ground to have their throats cut open.
Enduring nearly two hours of sermons and speeches by the purist Islamic Taliban officials and clerics, the crowd jostled for a better view when the large butcher's knives descended on the victims' throats.
Following the execution, Taliban fighters policing the event used sticks and rubber hoses to beat back an invasion by hundreds of spectators rushing to get a closer view of the bloodied turf and mangled throats.
Popcorn and cigarette salesmen did a roaring trade as their captive audience
* consisting of only men and young boys-jabbered happily in the bright spring sunshine.
Earlier this month another Afghan accused of murder was executed by the brother of the slain man, while two other men accused of sodomy were killed by having a wall of mud and brick pushed on top of them.

[Nov. 3, 1998] -- If Nazis wore turbans and prayed toward Mecca five times a day, we'd have a name for them. They'd be the Taliban.

Awful new revelations about the Taliban's brutal and bloodthirsty ways were released yesterday in reports about what will probably go down as one of the ugliest massacres in the 20th century--the takeover of the Afghanistan town of Mazar-i Sharif, where as many as 8,000 people died in an incredible ethnic slaughter that rivals the worst killing fields of Rwanda and Bosnia.

The holy warriors of the Taliban re-captured Mazar-i Sharif just three months ago, taking it back from rebel forces who had held it for more than a year while the religious bosses of the Taliban secured their merciless grip on the rest of the country. Along with control of the city, the Taliban took revenge--and plenty of it.

According to the group Human Rights Watch, whose mission is to document the horrors of places like Afghanistan and Kosovo, the Taliban killed hundreds of men simply because they were ethnic Hazaras. The Hazaras and other fighters had turned against the Taliban last May, forcing them out of Kabul in a bloody double-cross that cost some 2,000 Taliban lives and was a major setback for the fundamentalist Taliban's bid to seize complete control of Afghanistan.

But this August, when the Taliban finally stormed the city again, the Hazaras--whose Asiatic features make them easy to pick out--paid for the double-cross with horrible deaths. Many were simply executed in the street with bullets to the head, chest and testicles. Others had their throats slit open. Dozens and perhaps hundreds of others are believed to have died excruciating deaths by asphyxiation and heat stroke when they were stuffed by the hundreds into sealed, overcrowded shipping containers and taken nearly 80 miles through the sweltering desert.

According to one witness, the Taliban even massacred 20 hospital patients in their beds.

More were killed as they tried to flee Mazar-i Sharif following the Taliban takeover. Other witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch told how Taliban soldiers opened fire with rockets and grenades as a huge procession of refugees filled the roads leading out of the city.

The group also claims there is substantial evidence that Taliban soldiers raped Hazara women as they overtook the city. One assault recorded in the Human Rights Watch report describes women being kidnapped and kept as sex slaves: "She said that when she went to their house, the Talibs abducted her and locked her up in a house with twenty to twenty-five other young girls and women. They were raped every night. They were all Hazaras. She was the only one released. One Talib told her that now they are halal [sanctified], and she should go to his parents in Qandahar and wait for him to come and marry her. He gave her a pass and his own identity card and told her to go to the Taliban's headquarters and from there to Qandahar, but instead she escaped."

After the massacres were over-a process that took just a few days, thanks to the energetic slaughtering-the Taliban were pleased with their work.

"Last year you rebelled against us and killed us. From all your homes you shot at us. Now we are here to deal with you," the Taliban's newly installed governor, Mulla Manon Niazi, announced on the second day of the takeover. In other speeches he reportedly announced: "The Hazaras killed our force here, and now we have to kill Hazaras" and "If anyone is hiding Hazaras in his house he too will be taken away. What [Hizb-i] Wahdat and the Hazaras did to the Talibs, we did worse ... as many as they killed, we killed more."

Doctors working in Taliban-held Afghanistan were ordered to deny treatment to women not accompanied by a close male relative, state-run Radio Shariat announced.

"The department of regulation and inspection of the public health ministry announces to all doctors and medical personnel not to examine and treat women without their legal Mahram present," Radio Shariat said.

The ruling is the latest in a long series of tough measures aimed at reforming public health structures, in which the puritanical Moslem militia has attempted to minimize contact between men and women. It is also likely to pose serious problems for the Afghan capital's estimated 30,000 widows, many of whom have no male relatives to accompany them.

All public hospitals have already been tightly segregated and are subject to regular inspections by religious police squads from the ministry for the fostering of virtue and prevention of vice.

It also comes amid a crisis of foreign-aid medical projects in the Afghan capital, many of which have been suspended following militia threats to locally recruited female staff.

The militia anti-vice ministry last month banned women from working for foreign aid groups unless they can show identity cards signed by the militia. So far no cards have been issued. Afghan female staff have also been barred from working outside approved health structures, shutting down a number of home-visit midwife and widow's health schemes.

The ruling is a further challenge to a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Taliban, signed last month amid a storm of criticism in which the UN was accused of ignoring universal principles of gender rights.

The UN took the controversial step of recognizing that female access to health in the Taliban-held two thirds of Afghanistan will need to be gradual.

The world body also recognized that even a gradual increase in female access to health would be "challenging" due to "economic difficulties and cultural

traditions."

KABUL, Afghanistan (AFP) -- A bus passenger is given a required Islamic haircut by a zealous member of Afghanistan's hardline Moslem Taliban militia

on Tuesday. According to Abdul Rahim dar Khasti, a senior Taliban fighter

based in the area who heads the three-man hairdresser checkpoint, hair covering the forehead will allow Satan to nest there and is therefore strictly banned by Islamic law. Over the past several days, Taliban warriors

have begun a campaign against long locks that has included seizing unkempt

Afghans and forcibly chopping off their hair. The crazed Taliban have waged

a brutal and bloody civil war for control of Afghanistan over the past three

years; they now control around two-thirds of the country.

<<hair.jpg>>

KABUL, Afghanistan-Merciless members of Afghanistan's Taliban militia savagely beat two Taliban soldiers accused of homosexuality on

Wednesday,

according to an AFP reporter's eyewitness account.

After a daylong ordeal of public humiliation and beatings, the men were tossed in jail-where they await a swift trial and horrible execution.

The two culprits were spotted in a military unit in the north of the city

indulging in homosexual intercourse earlier in the day and had to endure

several hours of taunts and beatings, a Taliban soldier said.

The accused were first tied up and driven around the city in the back of a

pick-up truck with their faces blackened by engine oil.

"We caught them this morning in a Khair Khana unit," a Taliban soldier told

AFP while beating the culprits-who gave no protest or resistance-with a thin

stick.

The badly-bruised alleged homosexuals were then driven to a Taliban base,

pushed out of the car and thrown into a fountain for "a purifying bath" in

front of tens of enthusiastic militiamen who joined in the beating.

In the two-thirds of Afghanistan held by the strict Moslem Taliban, the punishment for sodomy is execution by having a wall pushed on top of the

guilty. This year alone, five people convicted of sodomy have been

killed in this manner. The two culprits will likely be handed to a military court and receive death sentences. Public executions are among the only entertainment available to Afghans living under Taliban rule. Music, television and most leisure activity is strictly forbidden. Strict codes of dress and conduct have been imposed on the Taliban army including a ban on killing prisoners of war, having long hair or a trimmed beard, wearing western dress and smoking hashish.

KABUL, Afghanistan (AFP) - Strict Moslem Taliban anti-vice patrols have punished 120 beard trimmers and 90 unveiled women in the Afghan capital, official radio said Thursday.

The report on Taliban mouthpiece Radio Shariat said the violators of their strict codes of conduct and appearance were caught by mobile patrols from the department for the fostering of virtue and prevention of vice. It did not state the type of punishment given to those caught, however most residents nabbed by the patrols are given an on-the-spot light beating with a rubber hose.

Under the Taliban, men are banned from trimming their beards, as the militia says short beards are not allowed by the "Sunnat," or traditions of the Moslem prophet. Women are required to wear the all-covering tent-like burqa garment, through which the wearer can catch a glimpse of the outside world through a small hexagonal mesh over the eyes.

The beard-trimmer crackdown-which is the first this year-comes amid steadily declining facial hair levels in the once-liberal capital. Many residents have returned to sporting neatly groomed beards in the false belief that last year's massive crackdowns-which saw over 1,200 arrested * had eased.

Last week radio Shariat also announced that 65 men, whose hair was deemed too long, had been given forced hair "improvements" by the

scissors-wielding
religious police, while 13 caught not offering congregational prayer
were
also "punished."
The Taliban control two-thirds of Afghanistan and have imposed what
they say
is the world's purest Islamic state.

<<hair.jpg>>

Attachment



hair.jpg

.jpg file, 450x328, 35k

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Forwarded Message

From: IMCEAMS-KYGOVTMAIL_NRDEP_NAGDA@ky.gov
To:

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 1998 8:49 AM

To: Nagda, D.S. (NREPC, DEP)
Subject: FW: Math can be fun
Importance: High

>>DON'T CHEAT BY SCROLLING DOWN FIRST!!!

>>It only takes 30 seconds.

>>And it really works!

>>

>>Work this out as you read.

>>

>>Don't read the bottom until you have worked it out!!!

>>

>> **Follow these 6 steps and this will amaze you...

>>

>>1. First of all, pick the number of days a week that

>>you would like to go out (see a movie, eat pizza, whatever).

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>2. Multiply this number by 2.

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>3. Add 5.

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>

>>4. Multiply it by 50.

>>

>>

>>

>>

>> 5. If you have already had your birthday this year,

>>add 1748. If you haven't, add 1747.

>>

>>

>>

>>

```

>>
>>6. Last step: Subtract the four digit year that you were born.
>>
>>
>>
>>SEE BELOW:
>>
>>RESULTS:
>>
>>You should now have a three digit number:
>>
>>
>>The first digit of this was your original number
>>(i.e., how many times you wanted to go out each week).
>>
>>
>>The second two digits are your age!!!
>>It really works!!!
>>
>>
>> ** This is the only year (1998) it will ever work, so spread
>>the joy around by mailing this to everyone you know!!!
>>
>>*****
>> \\//
>> ~ ~
>> o o
>>  V
>>
>>*****
>>
>>Have Fun !!
>>*****
>>The solution is obvious: {100A + 1997 - B}; where A is your first
>>choice
>>i.e. the number of days a week you want to go see movies, and B is your
>>year
>>of birth. Nothing miracle, we gave our year of birth and it gave our
>>age in
>>today's year. Math is fun!
>>*****

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RE: Clinton
Date:Thu, 24 Sep 1998 13:09:01 -0500
What do you think?

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From: Shah, Gunvant (CORCO)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 1998 11:56 AM
To: Nagda, D.S. (NREPC, DEP)
Subject: FW: Clinton
Importance: High

From: Presley, Mary
To: Brown, Allen; Wang, Bert (CORCO); Shah, Gunvant; Gevedon, Jhan;
Wilson,
Jim - CORCO; Carpenter, Mark S; Gray, Nancye; Frost, Donna - Media
Services
Subject: FW: Clinton
Date: Thursday, September 24, 1998 6:48AM
Priority: High

From: Thurman, Marilyn (DES)
To: Black, Debbie (DMS) (CHRDMS1); Sergent, Gina (DMS)
(CHRDMS1);
James, Mary Ann (DMS) (CHRDMS1); Presley, Mary (CORCO); Groves,
Paula
(PERS); Wright, Burlita (KYTC); Gatewood, Jeannie (KYTC); Mackey,
Ranelle
(KYTC); Stewart, Debbie (DES); Burton, Ginny (DES); Hampton, Janet
(DES);
Pettway, Jean (DES); Lewis, Marcia (DES); Six, Robbie (DES); Jesse,
Sheila
(DES); PWright505@aol.com
Subject: FW: Clinton
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 1998 11:10AM
Priority: High

From: Murphy, Estelle Sue (DMS_SURS)
To: Manley, Betty (DMS); Black, Debbie (DMS); Johnson, Janet
(DMS); James, Mary Ann (DMS); Luttrell, Jennifer -Stu Fam Su;
Kelley,
Michelle - DMA; Wunderlich, Susan; Thurman, Marilyn; JUSTMEWV@aol.com;
Marmola2@aol.com; Winmo1@aol.com
Subject: FW: Clinton
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 1998 10:23AM
Priority: High

From: Murphy, Tom (KYTC-WSC)
To: Murphy, Estelle Sue (DMS_SURS) (CHRDMS1); Luttrell, Jennifer -Stu
Fam
Su; Wunderlich, Susan (LRCANX2)
Subject: FW: Clinton
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 1998 10:01AM
Priority: High

<<File: BILL (1).BMP>>

Forwarded Message

From:
IMCEAMS-KYGOVTMAIL_NRDEP_NAGDA@ky.gov
To:

Subject:
FW: Clinton
Date:
Thu, 24 Sep 1998 13:10:00 -0500
Plain Text Attachment [Download File | Save to my Yahoo! Briefcase]

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<<BILL(1).BMP>>

Attachment

BILL_1_.BMP

.bmp file

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Forwarded Message

From:

IMCEAMS-KYGOVTMAIL_NRDEP_NAGDA@ky.gov

Subject:

Read: FW: Clinton

Date:

Thu, 24 Sep 1998 13:06:04 -0500

Plain Text Attachment [Download File | Save to my Yahoo! Briefcase]

Your message

To: Nagda, D.S. ;

Subject: FW: Clinton

Sent: Thu, 24 Sep 1998 11:56:00 -0500

was read on Thu, 24 Sep 1998 13:06:00 -0500

Forwarded Message

From:

nagdads@yahoo.com

To:

nagdads@hotmail.com

Subject:

1. India, the motherland
2. Do what is Right
3. Dedicate all actions to the Almighty
4. Mind should be kept under control
5. Supreme Being, the first teacher
6. Surrender, easy means to liberation
7. Renunciation, key to true happiness
8. Devotion to God, an end in itself
9. Moral order can never be destroyed
10. Piety, an excellent human quality
11. Prayers help mitigate one's sufferings
12. Devotion to Lord, not a barren ritual
13. Prerequisites of spiritual life
14. Service to God, goal of human life
15. Almighty's grace, unconditional
16. Righteousness must be upheld always
17. All events take place as per God's will
18. God keen to reform erring individuals
19. An embodiment of true devotion 'Guru' who stood for national unity
20. Surrender to God must be absolute
21. Scriptures lay stress on duty, discipline
22. A gift given by God
23. The means to secure divine grace
24. Chanting mantras requires discipline
25. Ways to receive Lord's blessings
26. Efficacy of the Divine name
27. Act with sense of responsibility
28. Uphold truth as the greatest penance
29. Transforming power of God's grace
30. Ego, an illusion of the mind
31. Man must discharge his duties
32. Hard work, must to get Divine grace
33. Need to observe moral injunctions
34. Realized souls see God everywhere

35. Craving for worldly objects is a sin
36. Religion helps one lead peaceful life
37. Religious rites linked with Nature
38. This was sent to me, thought you might find interesting
39. Knowledge alone can liberate man & Infinite compassion of the Almighty
40. Providence cannot be thwarted
41. Is Heaven in the Yellow Pages/Don't Drink
42. Human birth, not accidental
43. Efficacy of chanting the Divine name
44. Bondage, result of man's ignorance
45. Preceptors show path to God's empire
46. Mother's supreme love for children
47. Moral law should not be contravened
48. Six real, unfailing relations of man
49. Greatness of the votaries of the Lord
50. Man must actualize his divine nature
51. Cultivate devotion
52. The Self, eternal in nature
53. Dedicate all actions to the Lord
54. Evolution theory and Avatars & Remember God in daily Life
55. Reaching God through music
56. Anger, chief enemy of mankind
57. Requisites of an ethical life
58. Discharge of duties obligatory
59. A perennial source of inspiration
60. Promoter of universal brotherhood
61. Horrible stories from Afghanistan
62. The philosophical part of the scriptures
63. The seeming paradox of spiritual life
64. Vedas common to all people
65. God stands by those who seek His grace
66. Company of holy men makes one perfect
67. Noble traditions must be safeguarded & Saint's message of love
68. A valuable guide for human excellence
69. Math can be fun
70. Humility helps one obey Divine Will
71. Adherence to rules pleases God
72. Worship of the Divine Mother
73. Discharge duty at all costs
74. The dynamic aspect of the Almighty
75. Creation, subject to the flux of time
76. Liberation, goal of human life
77. Ignorance, cause of man's sufferings
78. Age-old values still hold good
79. Seeking the company of holy men
80. Prahlada's deep devotion to Lord

81. God guides those attached to Him
82. Love for Sri Krishna is the ultimate goal
83. Service to devotees pleases the Lord
84. Unconditional nature of Divine grace
85. Guru's grace essential for realizing God
86. Eulogy on the Lord and His devotee
87. Ignorance, cause of man's sorrows
88. Merit of prostrating before devotees
89. God's generosity is bounteous
90. Bhishma, 'a man of terrible vow'
91. Four stages of human life
92. S??stands for noble values
93. Religion helps one lead blissful life
94. Human birth a rare privilege
95. Spiritual outlook gives mental poise
96. Devotee, dear to the Almighty
97. Acknowledge God's grace always
98. God who removes obstacles
99. Develop mental equipoise
100. Study of epics kindles one's hope
101. God's grace is instrumental
102. Festivals bring people closer
103. God's grace must to discharge duties
104. God is always present amidst us
105. Saint who fulfils devotees' desires
106. Nuggets of insight gems to live by
107. Saints act for the sake of humanity
108. Devotion alone matters to God
109. Perform action for its own sake
110. Almighty's concern for His devotees
111. A saint with great spiritual powers
112. Mantras and rituals effective forever
113. Divine Mother saves true devotees
114. One must lend ears to holy men's advice
- 115. TO ALL MOTHERS and CHILDREN**
- 116.