

*I pray for devotion,
O Lord Divine!*



*I pray for devotion O Lord Divine, for strength in love I implore
May I ever stay at Thy Lotus Feet, this distance I cannot endure.*

*May this mind with faith be filled, at Thy threshold let it remain
Grant that through meditation and love, Thy beautiful vision I gain.*

*Let exclusive love for You surpass, all material longings I pray
I shall roam this entire world, till I find my Beloved one day.*

*Intensify my yearning Lord, that I may tread Thy way
May this mind so coloured in worldly shades, be tinged in Thy hues I pray.*

*Who can wed Thee without Thy aid? Can I 'pon Thy countenance gaze?
Without Thy help this unanchored mind, cannot even sing Thy praise.*

*I am weak, I cannot reach Thy abode without support; Lord! Hear my plea
Even though I am undeserving I know, give strength to come to Thee.*

*Come! O Come! Show me Thy way, take my hand and lead me to Thee
I know not what means I can employ, O teach Thy ways to me!*

राम मुझे तू भक्ति दे

राम मुझे तू भक्ति दे, भक्ति में वह शक्ति दे।
तेरे चरण में पड़ी रहूँ पिया, तीव्र चरण अनुरक्ति दे॥

श्रद्धा से हो मन भरा हुआ, तेरे द्वार पे हो बस पड़ा हुआ।
ध्यान नयन सों जब देखें, तू सामने हो बस खड़ा हुआ॥

जग की चाहना मिट जाये, बस तेरी चाहना हिय धरे।
तेरे मिलन की चाह लिये, पूर्ण जग में वह फिरा करे॥

तीव्र करो चाहना मन की, इस पथ पे आज मैं चल ही दूँ।
मन जो जग सों है रंगा हुआ, अब तेरे रंग में ढाल ही दूँ॥

बिन तेरे वरे कौन तुमको वरे, कौन तुम तक रामा आ पाये।
करे लाख यत्न न टिके वा मन, कौन गीत तिहारे गा पाये॥

मैं निर्बल हूँ हे राम मेरे, बिन तब बल तुम तक आ न सकूँ।
पात्र कुपात्र मैं न समझूँ, मुझे बल दे तुम तक आ पहुँचूँ॥

आकर राह दिखा मुझको, कर पकड़ के संग ले जा मुझको।
किस विध तुम तक आ पहुँचूँ, ऐसा अब ढंग सिखा मुझको॥

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"Blessed and happy is he
that ariseth to promote
the best interest
of the peoples and
kindreds of the earth....
It is not for him
to pride himself
who loveth
his own country,
but rather for him
who loveth
the whole world.
The earth is
but one country,
and mankind its citizens."

Baha'U'llah



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Pearls of Practical Wisdom



Mr. R.M. Sabharwal was a spiritual seeker who left the corporate world at the height of his career to come to Param Puja Ma, who not only gave direction to his aspirations but also showed him the true purpose of his life.

His contribution to the growth of Arpana can never be forgotten.

This piece has been taken from an article written by him in 1989

There is an irresistible urge within, to share the joy of discovery of the Divine attitude, as so clearly seen in the lives of the *avtars*, the saints and sages. These children of God live a life of love, imbued with humane values, bring joy by sheer identification and live for others with an intensity greater even than that of those who are striving just for themselves. These fundamental truths are applicable to all, in all walks of life, wherever we are and whatever our occupation.

One of the greatest mysteries of human existence is our inability to accept and live in the fact that each one of us must die, that this body follows the inevitable cycle of birth, growth, decay and death. In this short span, we die each moment we do not follow the Master's injunctions. The phenomenon of physical death is a very natural thing and we can either face the prospect with fear and in so doing, die each moment, or live in total joy and free of all worry, by being a good and faithful servant of God.

The great irony is that while we all have, within the scope of each one of us, the formula for a life eternal, for satiation, fulfilment and unalloyed

peace and happiness within, we fail to grasp it with both hands. We try our own solutions, we follow the labyrinthic byways of our own minds, and create complexities and sow the seeds of sorrow for ourselves and others.

We can always turn to the Lord's injunctions, and quickly achieve happiness, simply by doing what our Master has guided us to do. Pujya Ma has often given us very simple practical guidelines, which contain eternal truths and which we know from personal experience lead us on the sure path of a deep peace within. Let us share just a few:

1. "I am totally content for there is none I claim as mine"

Pujya Ma has always said that each one of us is the Lord's, and no one is mine to possess and from whom to have expectations. Each one has a right to freedom and to choose what he defines as the best way to live or the best thing to do. If I honestly accept that none is mine, then I will start becoming the other's, whosoever the other may be. The more I identify with the other, the more I will forget myself. Unhappiness is directly proportionate to expectation. Expectation tends to stifle freedom and crush joy; it focusses on oneself, while identification and love focusses on the other. If there is to be expectation, it should be of oneself to love and serve incessantly. Herein is the secret of joyful living.

2. "No one has ever given me sorrow, I have no reason to blame anyone"

Joy and peace, or sorrow and a lack of inner tranquillity, depend purely on the way one looks at a person or a situation. All interaction with people, and all occurrences, are external to myself. They will disturb me only to the extent I allow it. If I can see all as the Lord's Grace, sent by Him, I will never feel adversity. If however, I have unsatiated desires and people do not fulfil them, I will harbor reactions, anger and rejection, and make myself sad within. It is within my capacity to be happy or otherwise. Each acts according to what he or she thinks is the best. It is not for me to judge. Even if someone does something patently wrong, I can either point an accusing finger, or I can understand the other's compulsions and not harbor criticism. There can only be love, no sorrow, in the hearts of those people going towards purity where the Lord resides. There can only be identification and not unfulfilled expectations. The Lord has said that all His *bhaktas* must have two qualities–

- i) Absence of a critical spirit towards all without exception.
- ii) A magnanimous heart towards each one.

3. "He is not in my life, but I am in his/hers"

In each walk of life I interact with people – at home, at work, and elsewhere. Each meeting brings about an interplay of the qualities of the other person, and myself. What the other thinks, does or says to me is his/her responsibility and beyond my control. However, what I think and say and do towards the other is within my control and entirely my responsibility. If I can consciously love, and be considerate towards, or serve the one before me, I will remain free of unhappiness, irrespective of the other's attitude towards me. My responsibility is only towards my attitude, thoughts and actions. If I

keep introspecting thus, and move consciously from one step to the next, and if I can look upon the other as an object of love and consideration, my happiness is guaranteed.

4. “Not even a leaf moves but by the Lord’s Will”

It is enjoined on us to do our utmost best, unceasingly and with absolute sincerity. The results are not in our hands; they are by our Master’s Will, to which I should surrender not in resignation, but most joyfully. In doing our best, we must remember to do it unseen, unsung, unheard, and never take any credit for the result. If an aspirant seeks credit or recognition, he commits a theft. We are to place the flowers of our prayers at our Lord’s Feet, without inhaling the fragrance. The fragrance is for the Lord alone.

If after all our earnest efforts, the outcome is as we wanted it, let us humbly bow in thanksgiving, and never breathe a word or harbor a thought of personal achievement. The Lord is the Doer, and even in the performance of the action, many persons have made their offering through participation in togetherness. If the result turns out not to be what we were striving for, we are being taught acceptance, without any regret or reaction.

Similarly, in interpersonal relationships, if someone says or does something which seems to be ‘hurting’, I should remember that this is the way the Lord is showing me my measure of sensitivity, which is directly proportionate to my attachment to myself. Looked at this way, I will not retaliate, but rather be grateful to the Lord, and to the person who said something I felt was unpleasant, because but for that incident I would never have become conscious of the impurity within me.

A grateful heart is a happy heart. A happy heart spreads happiness, and happiness is our birthright.

5. “The Lord is my Divine Companion and Witness”

Puja Ma has so often reminded us that the easiest, most beautiful and surest path to joy within, and to the Lord, is to take Him along with us wherever we go, whatever we do. If we look up to Him, talk to Him and feel His presence, we will become His and undergo a radical change in our attitude. How can we behave otherwise than our very best always, if the Lord is our constant witness?

All I have to do to be absolutely content forever, is to obey Him implicitly, to carry out His injunctions as enshrined in the Scriptures, and have Him as my constant Companion. Why then should I not lay all at His Feet, and carefree, go along with Him on what is the most beautiful journey, the most fascinating adventure, in this life and beyond?

O Lord, grant me an unswerving faith, grant me the greatest gift of all – Your Kingdom in my heart. May I ever love and serve Thee by loving and serving Thy children, whoever and wherever they may be. Thus Divine Master, will I ever stay at Thy Lotus Feet.



***“He who remembers Me in his last moments
whilst leaving the body, attains My very Essence...”***



This exciting reassurance from Lord Krishna in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita persuades the Jivatma to keep mind and heart focussed on the Supreme. Who can predict which moment shall be our last? How can one be sure that at that crucial moment one's thoughts will be centred on the Lord? And... most importantly, can all beings attain the Lord's Essence by merely remembering Him in the last moments of their lives?

*Param Puja Ma answers all these questions that rise in our hearts in her elucidation of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita
~ A Guide to Daily Living...*

In the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says:

He who remembers Me in his last moments whilst leaving the body, attains My very Essence. Of this there is no doubt. 8/5

“A person who thinks of Me at the time of death”

- a) One whose mind is fixed steadily on the Supreme Essence even as death stands before him.
- b) One who remains detached even as he sees the body slipping away.
- c) One whose intellect remains stable even whilst seeing the body dying.
- d) One who remains impartial in his last moments.
- e) One who is devoid of any remorse or regrets when death approaches.
- f) One who remains detached at that crucial time and whose mind is ever fixed on the Supreme Essence and the fact that all is He.
- g) One who remembers the nature of the Supreme at that moment.
- h) One who keeps his mind focused on the Supreme *Atma* at that time.
- i) One who keeps his mind on That Indestructible Essence in his last moments.
- j) One who remembers at that moment that the body is perishable.

One must understand here, that 'leaving the body' does not apply only to death. Freedom from the body idea, absence of the intellect which is

partisan to the body, steadfastness in the state of an *Atmavaan* – all these states connote the severing of one's attachment with the body.

However, before attaining such a state:

1. That individual must have ceaselessly worshipped the Lord.
2. That individual must have lived in the presence of the Supreme constantly.
3. He must have offered all his actions to his Lord.
4. He would have spent a lifetime practising selfless deeds.
5. All his life he would have practised severing his attachment with his body, mind and intellect.
6. He would have already attained equanimity.
7. His practice would have been persevering and ceaseless,
 - only then could he be established in that Supreme State.
 - only then could he be absorbed into the Lord's Essence.
 - only then could he be one with the Lord Himself.

He who remembers in his last moments that he is the *Atma* and not the body, how can such a one consider the death of the body to be the end of his life? Even as he watches the decline of the body, established as he is in his Essential Self, he will remain detached and unaffected.

He who knows That Supreme Lord to be *Adhibhuta*, Master of *Prakriti*, this gross entirety, *Adhidaiva*, the Universal Ruler of all *devatas*, and *Adhiyagya*, the Supreme Receiver of all deeds performed as an offering to the Lord, he acknowledges the Lord as the Master of the gross body, its destiny and its actions. If all this is the Lord, what remains is the *Atma*. So why fear? From the point of view of the indivisibility of the Self, there is no difference between the Lord and that Realised *Atmavaan*. Where the body is concerned, its elements merge into the elements of the universe.

Thereafter, *Bhagwan* narrates the secret of life after life:

O Arjuna, the thought that occupies his mind at the time of relinquishing the body, is the same thought that he was absorbed in throughout his lifetime. He attains that same belief again. 8/6

The Lord explains again:

- a) Whatever you have accepted as the Truth during life is inevitably what you will receive in the next birth.
- b) Whatsoever may have been the principal purpose of your life will be given to you again.
- c) Whatever plans you may have made for the attainment of a certain objective, those very attributes will be granted to you again in your future life. The essential core of your life will inevitably meet up with you once again.
- d) The purpose of your life will confront you again.
- e) You will inevitably encounter people with the same style of conduct as yours.
- f) Whatever treatment you gave to the world with a mind full of attachments and aversions, you will be treated similarly.

- g) The atrocities you have committed in order to attain a desired goal will come before you undoubtedly.
- h) Whatever misdeeds you have indulged in of your own will and for your pleasure, will be inflicted on you.
- i) If you have never considered anyone to be yours, how can anyone ever fulfil any duty towards you?
- j) You too, will be the recipient of the immense sorrow you have given to the world.
- k) If your life was devoid of mercy and *dharma*, you will be met with only mercilessness and *adharma*.
- l) If you had never practised compassion, nobody will have compassion for you.
- m) If you sought only desire fulfilment, yet remained unsatiated, you will never experience the peace of satisfaction.

Consider further, having conducted yourself in this manner:

- 1. you always proved yourself to be blameless;
- 2. you justified yourself as correct;
- 3. you justified all that you did contrary to *dharma*, by giving all kinds of arbitrary reasons;
- 4. you forsook your duty, giving several excuses to absolve yourself;
- 5. you were not true even to yourself;
- 6. your arguments were always based on sheer imagination;
- 7. you never did justice to anyone, yet you continued to consider yourself the most just.
- 8. Concealing your true intent, you tried to project yourself as a sage.
- 9. Despite noticing your lacunae, you continued to give yourself airs.
- 10. Thus using arguments filled with fallacies, you tried continually to prove yourself sinless. You believed those false arguments to be true and justified your deeds.

Whatever you did to others will be returned to you. Your basic intent is bound to bear fruit.

- 11. The justice that you formulated for yourself will come before you some day.
- 12. Truth will yield its fruit. It will create a future seed.
- 13. That falsehood which you tried to present as the Truth will attain a concrete form and come before you.
- 14. If you have committed any transgression and then proved it to be correct and thus tried to absolve yourself of its blame, it will one day confront you once more.
- 15. What you gave to another, will be given to you. What you have taken from the other, will be taken away from you.
- 16. However, you must remember, it will be taken away from you in the same circumstances as you took it from the other.

Therefore, consider what you must do. Whatever you have received at this moment has been a gift of destiny to you. Now perceive your own intent and thought process. It is this thought process that creates the future seed.

The Lord seems to be saying, "Perceive clearly and carefully, what are your thoughts today?"

Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight! Having dedicated your mind and intellect unto Me, you will attain Me. There is no doubt about it. 8/7

The Lord says that one's inner intent is the seed that creates one's future life.

"Therefore:

1. Fix your mind in Me constantly.
2. With your mind thus fixed in Me, perform all your tasks in the world.
3. Experience My presence at all times as a witness.
4. Learn how to live for Me and in My Name.
5. Let your life be one of *yagya*, for it is I who abides in all acts of *yagya*.
6. Let Truth be your mainstay and support; renounce the support of spurious thoughts, concepts and beliefs.
7. Wipe out *raag* and *dvesh* - attachment and aversion - from your memory, for you are the *Atma*.
8. If I am always with you as a witness, you will be able to abide in Me.
9. If you remember Me at all times, you will be able to know Me and you will never be troubled by avarice, greed and desire.
10. The mind will then have no opportunity to indulge in grudges, or in moods of sorrow and happiness, or in any act of injustice.
11. If I Myself abide in the heart, where is the place for anger or remorse?
12. If you keep Me with you always,
 - how can enmity remain?
 - you will only be able to perform noble deeds.
 - you will not be inimical even with your enemies.
 - where will you find the time to indulge in worry and sorrow?"

The truth is, where the Lord Himself abides, it is indeed difficult to find any room for other thoughts. Therefore the Lord advises, "Keep your mind fixed in Me."

- a) Then confront all situations with courage.
- b) Fulfil all your duties with vigilance and shrewdness.
- c) Do as the Lord Himself does always.
- d) Act, but without attachment.
- e) Do not be attached to any external situations.
- f) Continue to perform all the actions required of you in any situation.

At that crucial moment, when frailty invaded Arjuna's heart, the Lord advises Arjuna, "Arise and fight! If your mind is truly fixed in Me, you will doubtless attain Me."

So also, must we jivas, who endeavour and strive in this world, keep our minds centred on the Supreme as we struggle amidst life's travails... With Him as our anchor, we will retain our equanimity even as we are tossed about in life's ocean by destiny. Keeping Him in our hearts all the time, our souls invigorated by His Name, we will inevitably abide in Him when the last moment comes, as indeed we were through every moment of life... ❖

May you find Rest in the Embrace of the Supreme...

A TRIBUTE

The past two months were witness to the passing away of three members of the Arpana family... As they traverse through the journey of the spirit into Eternity, we wish them God speed and all love, praying for their voyage of spiritual fulfilment to be successful and fulfilling...

Mrs. Santosh Vidyasagar Gupta



Her incredible warmth, her humble demeanour and loving heart enveloped all without exception. Mrs. Santosh Gupta was a living example of Param Pujya Ma's directive "Love All!" Her immense love for her *Sadguru* enabled her to give of herself in whichever way she could to enhance and augment the service activities of Arpana. For years, she alone managed

Arpana's Handicrafts table at the Maurya Sheraton in Delhi, not only handling the stocks and sales, but also making for Arpana, many friends and customers because of her persuasive talent, stemming from her innate sincerity towards the 'seva' she herself had undertaken. Thereafter, she was always there to offer herself for Arpana's handicraft sales organized by Drs. Rahul and Lena Gupta annually at their home in Friends Colony.

She identified herself so totally with Param Pujya Ma's Word that it helped her to endure the physical travails brought to her by destiny. She bore her pain and discomfort silently and bravely, trying to avoid giving the least trouble to her loved ones. And when the end came, it came silently... as always, with the least amount of trouble given to her family, who surrounded her with their loving care and warmth...

We will miss you dearest Santosh Aunty, but we experience a strange sense of peace, knowing that you are now united with your *Sadguru* to whom you had offered your all. Thank you for all the love you have always given us and for being a source of great inspiration for us all.

Mrs. Rani Chopra



'Rani Auntie' as she was fondly called by all the members of Arpana family, endeared herself to all with her gentle loving manner and her sincere application to the task allotted to her by her *Sadguru*, Param Pujya Ma. During the many years that she stayed at Arpana with her husband, Mr. B.P. Chopra, she undertook the vital task of categorizing the vast ocean of knowledge that flowed forth from Param Pujya Ma continually. In a dedicated and committed manner, she worked incessantly, her heart and mind both absorbed in the essence of the knowledge that she was tabulating.

Even when destiny took her away from Arpana to Chandigarh with her husband, never once did she relinquish her close ties with all at Arpana. She was in constant touch and continually concerned about each member of the family... enquiring after their health, remembering their birthdays and always giving her love in whichever way she could.

Your memory deeply and lovingly etched in our hearts, we bid you adieu dearest Rani Auntie, and wish for you the fruition of your highest spiritual goals as you travel from life to life with the eternal blessings of your *Sadguru*.

Kanta Didi



With a courageous and indomitable nature as her support, Kanta didi went through life undaunted by all circumstances that were given to her by destiny. Ill health never suppressed her resolute spirit. Her need for spiritual sustenance was met by Param Pujya Ma's presence in her life. For a short while, she came to stay at Defence Colony, Arpana's Centre

in Delhi. Relationships created at that time, continued into the future, even when she changed her place of residence.

We pray that with Ma in her heart, she walks into eternity with the same undaunting and unflinching spirit that accompanied her through life. May she ever rest in peace.

The Simple Path...



...to Union with the Divine Beloved

ADAPTED BY ABHA BHANDARI

Param Pujya Ma shows the spiritual aspirant the simple path to union with the Divine Beloved. Giving a simile of Arjuna's divine communion with Lord Krishna, she says...

Shyam Himself this assurance has given...

*'When you call me with love
I come running to you instantly...
You will find me in your innermost core!'*

*With my heart filled with faith,
And a lone desire for Him permeating my inner being,
May my mind from worldly cravings turn away...
And may my mind yearn for Thee as a fish yearns for life-giving water!*

*When separation's agony becomes impossible to bear
May these eyes brim with tears... not wanting to see aught else but Thee!
May they seek just Thee in Thy entire Creation
Immersed only in Thy thoughts!*

*Why should I fear aught when my Lord Himself this assurance gives...
Why do I not simply seek His refuge
And offer my all to Him?*

In the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, *Bhagwan* narrates the simple method of attaining the Self.

O Arjuna, whosoever remembers Me constantly with an undivided mind, I am easily obtainable for that *Yogi* who is ever absorbed in Me. 8/14

Pay heed to what the Lord is saying! "He who unceasingly remembers Me at all times, that *Yogi*, focused on Me with an unswerving mind, will speedily attain Me."

It almost seems as though the Lord is begging the *jiva* for alms of love. He repeatedly says:

1. "Love Me a little more!
2. I am yours!
3. I will relieve you of all your sorrows.
4. I will ensure your absorption into *Om*.
5. I will mould you in My own likeness.
6. I will ensure your deliverance from the body idea.
7. I will annihilate your ego.
8. I will cleanse you of ignorance and make you the embodiment of knowledge.
9. All your tasks will be fulfilled even better.
10. Your life will become beautiful.
11. I will give you all that you seek.
12. All your sins of many lifetimes will be washed away.
13. I will become your servitor and fulfil all your tasks.
14. Only love Me a little more!"

- Please remember,
- a) The Lord cannot be attained through knowledge.
 - b) He cannot be achieved through extensive *tapas* – endurance and forbearance.
 - c) If you truly love, all these will naturally follow.
 - d) If the Lord's memory is constant within your heart, you can attain Him with ease.
 - e) If He is always beside you as your witness, you can attain Him with ease.
 - f) They who do not let Him out of their memory even for a moment, attain His Essence with ease.

- g) When your desire is for the Lord, He will be at your side.
- h) He will never sever his relationship with you.

Yoga is love. *Yoga* is union with the Beloved. When such love happens, the *Yogi* cannot forget his Beloved even for an instant. That individual lives only for his Beloved. Ultimately, only the Beloved remains.

This is *Yoga*. This is love. This is the Truth. This is the Name divine. This is the aspirant's hope, his thirst and his quest.

Look ! The Lord calls out to us in so many different ways. He says:

Great souls, who have attained the highest perfection, attain Me and are no more subjected to rebirth marked by sorrow and transience.

The Lord says:

1. Having attained union with the Lord, and having transcended the body, you are not subjected to rebirth.
2. Once you give up the body idea, you are not subjected to rebirth.
3. Once you become an *Atmavaan*, you are never reborn.
4. Once all relationships with that which is not the *Atma* are forsaken, those relationships are never resurrected.
5. Once you become an *Atmavaan*, the body no longer remains yours. Who then will claim that statue of clay?

If the body is not yours, how can rebirth pertain to you?

- a) Once you have renounced the body during your lifetime, then the birth or death of that body is not your birth or death.
- b) When that body is guided and controlled by the universal law, how are you concerned about what transpires with that body.?
- c) If it is merely *gunas* that interact with other *gunas*, why must you be affected? Knowing that all that happens is spontaneous and self instigated, you will become detached.
- d) The 'I' which was the master of the body now abdicates. Then who is born and who dies?

- Then it is the *Atma* that unites with the *Atma*.
- Then only the *Atma* remains.
- Then no name and form is mine to claim; the entire world is merely the Self.
- All that remains is the witness, so to say. In reality, even the witness is superfluous.
- You can understand it in this manner: only *Brahm* and His creation remain.
- When the whole world is tinged with the hues of *Brahm*, all that remains is the *Atma*.

Then only the *Atma* and *Prakriti* exist; only *Prakriti* remains... in complete silence when Supreme Union or *Yog* is attained. ❖

Blind Pursuit of the Senses

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
एव धर्मान् पृथक् पश्यंस्तानवानु विधावति ॥

As the rainwater falling on inaccessible great heights rapidly disperses over lower hilly regions in various directions, so also the jiva, mistakenly perceiving the varied attributes of objects as different from the Supreme Being, pursues them with great rapidity.

Kathopanishad, chapter 2, valli 1, shloka 14



Just as rain falls 'pon the peaks, of mountains lofty and high
And raindrops spontaneously find their way, to the foothills of hilly terrain,
Donning the form of a gushing stream, they gather all they find in the way;
From all directions little streams combine, into a rivulet carrying all in its sway.

So also the ignorant, foolish jiva, perceiving the Supreme Whole as diverse
Pursues and covets with blind obsession, all the objects of this universe.
Little realising that the Supreme Truth, encompasses all in its Essence,
'Tis with the support of Its creative force, that each being gains its presence.

That One Essence dons many a form, as both terrible and sublime It appears;
At times an enemy It seems to become, and at times as a friend It appears.
None exists but That Non-dual One, which divides Itself in profusion;
Recognise That as the Supreme Support, and merge yourself in Divine fusion.

Beyond Illusion

ADAPTED FROM A TALK BY SWAMI PRABHUPADA

Describing Himself Chaitanya Mahaprabhu once said, "I am not a *brahmana* (intellectual), I am not a *kshatriya* (political leader), I am not a *vaishya* (merchant) or a *shudra* (labourer). I am not a *brahmchari* (student), I am not a *grihastha* (householder), I am not a *vanaprastha* (retired person) or a *sannyasi* (renunciate)... I am the servant of the servant of the servant of Krishna.

This should be our identification. This is a very good identification. In Krishna consciousness, members are addressed as '*prabhu*'. *Prabhu* means 'master'. The idea is that I recognize that you are my master and that I am your servant – just the



opposite of material consciousness. In the material world everyone wants to place himself as the master. "I am your master; you are my servant." But spiritual existence means thinking, "I am your servant; you are my master."

By the force of *maya* or illusion, we adopt so many identifications: "I am a rich man," "I am a minister," "I am this," "I am that." And when we become frustrated with all these designations, we try to become God. This is the last snare of *maya*.

Spirituality teaches us to become humble. As Chaitanya Mahaprabhu instructs: you have to think that you are lower than the straw in the street. Very humble. And more tolerant than the tree. The trees are very tolerant. They give us shelter, they give us

shade, they give us fruits, flowers and wood. But the trees do not protest. They stand silently.

He further says, "One must refuse all kinds of respect for oneself and offer all respect to others." Suppose somebody insults you: "You rascal! You such and such!" If you know that you are not your body, that you have nothing to do with your body, then whether you are called 'rascal' or 'your lordship', it is the same to you. You know these are only designations of the body.

Today many people are anxious to get an M.A. or a Ph.D. But what is this M.A. this Ph.D.? Simply bodily designations. As soon as your body is finished, all your M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s are finished. Then you will have to accept another body. And you do not know what kind of body you will have to accept. There are 8,400,000 different kinds of bodies and which kind of body you will get in your next life is determined by your activities in this life. According to your mentality at the last moment of your present life, you will get a certain kind of body in your next. The mind is your subtle body, and at the time of death it will carry you to a suitable womb of a mother, where you will get another gross body. Upon birth you will begin to work according to the facilities of your body. This is the process of birth, which is full of suffering.

If we try to understand God and our relationship with Him, we become qualified to enter the spiritual kingdom. And once we enter the spiritual kingdom after giving up our present body, we are assured of never again having to take birth in

this material world. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna states the same thing: "One who goes back home, back to Godhead, never comes again to this miserable, conditioned life in the material world."

This material world is a place of misery. But we think we are happy. This is *maya* - "what is not." We think we are making progress, we are happy, we are civilized, we are advanced. No, you are not advanced, you are not civilized you are not happy. And you are not wise, because you do not know what you are. You think you are the body. Therefore, whatever else you think is all null and void, *maya*.

Maya is very strong. It is very difficult to overcome *maya* because she is capturing you in so many ways. For example, even if you are very wise and you understand your spiritual position - "*aham brahmasmi*: I am not matter; I am *Brahman*, a spirit soul" - even at this stage *maya* may make you think, "I am the Supreme *Brahman*, God." This means you are still in ignorance, because you are not God.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explains the actual meaning of *aham brahmasmi*. When you are actually *Brahman*-realized, when you have realized that you are not matter but spirit, the first symptom is that you become joyful (*prasannatma*). You have no more anxiety. You stop lamenting and hankering. And because you have spiritual vision, you see every living entity on an equal level. You do not see the body; you see the spirit. You do not see an American or an Indian, a rich man or a beggar or a dog, you see the spirit

soul. This is *Brahman* realization.

But seeing the oneness of all living entities is still not sufficient. You have to go further and engage yourself in the activities of *Brahman*. As Lord Krishna says, "After *Brahman* realization, actual devotional service begins." It is to understand, "I am a spirit soul, and the Lord is the Supreme Spirit. Therefore, I should serve Him."

In the Vedas it is said, "God supplies all the necessities of the innumerable other living entities." You require sunlight, so God created sunlight. You require water, so God has created immense quantities of water. You require air, so God provides an inexhaustible supply of

air. When He has created everything, how can we claim that this planet, the earth belongs to us? The Ish Upanishad says, "Don't claim for yourself more than you need."

In the Gita, Krishna says, "I am the proprietor of all planets." We come and go but God's property remains. And when we accept that God is the ultimate owner of everything and all living entities are His children, there is peace. Everyone has a right to live at the expense of God, but nobody should encroach upon the property of others. This is the system for perfect social harmony. Just try to enjoy what is allotted to you and be satisfied with that.



Humility... the mark of the Wise and Noble

Once Sri Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Guru, was sitting on his Aasan and giving a discourse to the following assembled there. At that time



Datu, son of Guru Angad Dev Ji, full of resentment at Sri Guru Amar Das Ji being chosen as the next Guru, angrily kicked Guru Ji with such force that Guru Ji fell down on the ground.

Guru Ji got up and instantly caught the feet of Datu and said, "Your feet are so very soft and being an old man, my body is very hard. I am worried ... I hope your foot is not hurt!"

Seeing this Datu was astonished and fell at the feet of Guru Ji. He realized that it was this extreme humility that empowered Guru Amar Das Ji to possess the position of his father.



Param Pujya Ma

Arpana

Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,
Karnal, Haryana, India
June 2014

ENRICHING OUR HEARTS

Sadhana Day

On 9th March, 2014, *Sadhana* Day was celebrated to commemorate Param Pujya Ma's enriching and enlightening presence in our lives, which has drawn us relentlessly towards the spiritual realms. Even today, her words inspire the listener to tread the path towards joy and freedom of the Spirit.

Param Pujya Ma's *Samadhi Divas*

Samadhi Divas is celebrated each April 16 to commemorate Param Pujya Ma's *Mahasamadhi*. All who were present, offered lit incense sticks at the *Samadhi*, which was bedecked with vibrant colours of fragrant flowers. The devotional music matched the innermost feelings within the hearts of all, strengthening their spiritual aspirations. Chhote Ma graced the occasion despite her recent ill health.



Handicraft Sales at Chandigarh and Amritsar

Exquisite hand embroidered linen and garments, produced by disadvantaged women in Haryana, trained by Arpana for income generation, were displayed at an Exhibition cum Sale at the Aroma Hotel, Chandigarh on March 20-22. A 3 day sale was also organized in Amritsar on March 28-30, which was enthusiastically received. Arpana is grateful to all its friends and supporters who help in organizing these sales, the proceeds of which benefit hundreds of women from impoverished rural homes.

In memory of our loved ones...

In April, the Arpana family lost two very dear and important members, Mrs. Raj Rani Chopra and Mrs. Santosh Gupta – both extremely dedicated, compassionate and caring members of the Arpana family. Arpana conveys its heartfelt condolences to their immediate families. They will always have a very special place in our hearts.

ARPANA HOSPITAL

Arpana Clinic at Gharaunda

Expanding Arpana's mission to extend affordable modern health care to all, an Arpana Outreach Clinic was inaugurated in Gharaunda, a town with few medical facilities, on March 3, 2014. A physician, a surgeon, an orthopaedics specialist and a gynaecologist from Arpana Hospital attend the clinic daily. Patients needing further care are taken to Arpana Hospital.

Paediatric Ward Inaugurated



On May 1, a 9-bedded Paediatric Ward at Arpana Hospital was inaugurated by Brig (Retd) A.K. Choudhary, Medical Superintendent. This is essential for meeting Arpana's aim of facilitating medical care for rural children.

Digital X-ray Installed

Arpana Hospital installed a long awaited digital X-ray on May 2. This will enable X-ray reports from specialists all over India and the world.

Arpana Hospital Outreach Camps (February to April 2014)

5 Free/Subsidized Orthopaedic Camps for 191 patients were held by Dr. Lokesh Charaya at Arpana Hospital in February and March, and at Taraori, Samalkha and Kairwali village in April.

9 Eye camps were held in Samalkha, Sanauli and Panipat towns in February, March and April. Rates for surgery were subsidized or free, while transportation, bed charges, food were all free.

3 Cardiac Camps were held by Dr. Anil Dhall, 2 at Arpana Hospital in February and March and one at Taraori in April. 58 patients were treated.

A Neuropathy Camp was held at Arpana Hospital by Dr. Steve Coates, a visiting consultant from the UK, who examined 12 patients.

A 6-Day Gynae Camp was organized at Arpana Hospital March 6-11, with 165 patients benefitting.

3 Employee Health Checkup Camps, one at Arpana Hospital in February and two at Panipat in April, benefitted 95 employees.

A free 2 Day Bone Densitometry Camp was held at Arpana Hospital with the help of Subh Laboratory, Ambala, in March for 179 patients, focusing on orthopaedic patients and older women.



Dr. Coates examining patient

HARYANA



Labourer's Cervical Injury Treated

Rajinder, a 39 year old illiterate agricultural labourer, suffered a cervical injury at work, leaving him in excruciating pain and unable to move his limbs. After unsuccessfully seeking help in Karnal, he was brought to Arpana Hospital. Arpana's Dr. Lokesh Charaya, MS Ortho, Fellow in Arthroscopy & Arthroplasty,

operated upon him with fusion of C5/C6 vertebral body with bone graft and plating – a first in this type of surgery at Arpana Hospital.

New Vehicle for the Differently Abled

The Baij Nath Bhandari Public Charitable Trust has donated a 10 seater Mahindra Jeep to Arpana for use in its program for the differently abled. This will be used to transport beneficiaries, trainers and workers for meetings, workshops and training sessions.

Arpana is very thankful to the Indian Development & Relief Fund, USA, the Christoffel Blindenmission, Germany, the Baij Nath Bhandari Public Charitable Trust, New Delhi, and the Tides Foundation (USA) for supporting Arpana's empowerment programs for the differently abled.

HIMACHAL

Training Program for Women in Tailoring

Arpana & NABARD held a 3 month training program in tailoring from February to April for 20 unemployed women of village Mankot of Himachal Pradesh. To encourage self employment, the trainees visited weaving and embroidery exhibitions in the handicrafts centre, Rang Mahal, as well as boutiques in the Chamba market on April 22.

Exposure Visit

20 farmers from Kolka, Bhalka & Priungal Villages visited the Farmers Information Centre, Saru, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, on March 10 & 11.

Dr. Rajeev Raina, Centre In-charge, emphasized the need for bringing more land under cultivation for off-season vegetables and adopting new techniques to enable farmers to grow more vegetables on the same land.

Discussions on quality seeds, methods of sowing and preventing vegetables from diseases were held. The farmers were given free literature and quality vegetable seeds.



DELHI – Molar Bund Programs



Remedial Classes

Mrs. Bani Rajgarhia, a dedicated volunteer, identified 125 junior children who needed academic help. During an intensive 3 month program of remedial classes, Mrs. Bani assessed each child's improvement, sending them to their respective classes when competent.

AWIC (Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children) Function

14 Arpana students participated in the AWIC annual program on 2nd April. Three students received best reader of the year award and Ranjit won an art prize. Padam Shri, Ms. Manorama Jafa, spoke on Mahatma Gandhi, then met and interacted with the children.

Performance of 'Sitaraon ke Paas'

70 of Arpana's children performed the inspirational play on Kalpana Chawla, the first woman astronaut from India, at Shri Ram Centre. This was written and directed by Mrs. Sushma Seth, Arpana's Cultural Director.

Annual Library Day at Molarbund

Arpana's Annual Library Day, at which we especially remember and honour Mrs. Usha Seth, founder of Arpana development services in Delhi, was celebrated on April 22. 107 students participated by performing skits on national and mythological heroes as well as items of yoga, song and dance.

We are grateful to the Essel Foundation, Aviva Life Insurance Co. and Caring Hand for Children (USA), for supporting Arpana's education program at Molar Bund, New Delhi.

Your assistance is needed to continue these programs:

Arpana Trust and Arpana Research & Charities Trust are both approved under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961, giving 50% tax relief for donors in India.

FCRA Registration No. for Arpana Trust is 172310001

FCRA Registration No. for Arpana Research & Charities Trust is 172310002

Send your contribution for dissemination of humane values & medical and community welfare services in Delhi to: **Arpana Trust, Madhuban, Karnal, Haryana 132 037**

Send your contributions for health & development services in Haryana & Himachal to:

Arpana Research & Charities Trust, Madhuban, Karnal, Haryana 132 037

Tel: 91-184-2380801, Fax: 91-184-2380810, at@arpana.org and arct@arpana.org

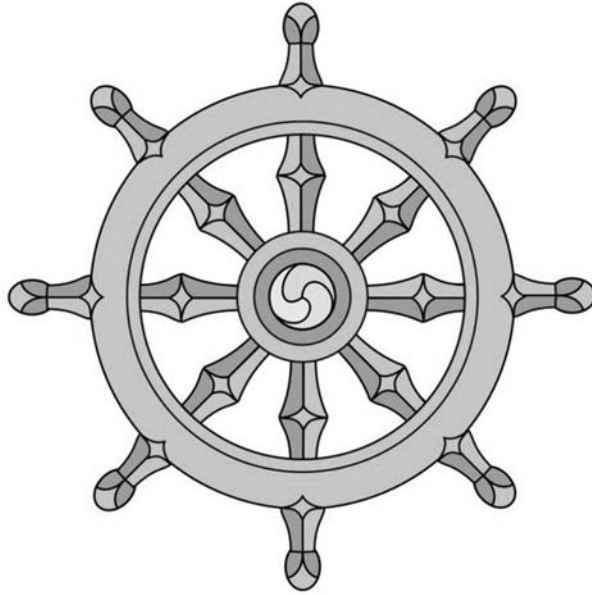
Please let us know by email or telephone, whenever you transfer funds to Arpana.

Mr. Harishwar Dayal, Executive Director of Arpana. Mobile: 9818600644

Mrs. Aruna Dayal, Director Development Mobile 91-9873015108, 91-9896242779

The Karma Digest

FROM THE SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA



*Param Pujya summarizes the role of actions in the life of the Jiva.
Are karmas binding or emancipating?
Find out in this synopsis of the 'digest of karmas...'*

The subtle mystery of *karma* and its revelation

O Pilgrim of the Spiritual path! Understand the mystery of *karma*. Let us review all that Lord Krishna has said...

1. Your right is only to action. (*Chp.2, shloka 47*)
2. Renounce attachment, establish yourself in *Yoga* and perform action with equanimity. (*Chp.2, shloka 48*)
3. Those who seek the fruits of their deeds are indeed pitiable. (*Chp.2, shloka 49*)
4. This *Yoga* of equanimity leads to dexterity in action; it is also the means to emancipate oneself from the fetters of action. (*Chp.2, shloka 50*)
5. The man of wisdom, endowed with a pure intellect, renounces all fruits of action and thus is freed from the bondage of birth and death. He attains the Supreme state. (*Chp.2, shloka 51*)

6. One who is completely devoid of desire, attachment, ego and craving, attains peace. (*Chp.2, shloka 71*)
7. One cannot achieve transcendence from *karma* through abstaining from embarking on action; nor can one attain perfection through renouncing deeds. (*Chp.3, shloka 4*)
8. *Karmas* are performed every moment of one's life. All beings perform actions enforced by the *gunas*. (*Chp.3, shloka 5*)
9. Those foolish ones, who restrain their organs of action through stubborn force and dwell mentally on the objects of the senses, are hypocrites. (*Chp.3, shloka 6*)
10. It is appropriate to perform all deeds with the organs of action, having freed oneself from attachment. (*Chp.3, shloka 7*)
11. All deeds in fact create bondage, except for those performed in the spirit of *yagya*. Be free from attachment and perform actions as an offering to the Supreme Lord. (*Chp.3, shloka 9*)
12. The deeds of *Brahm* and of the gods are imbued with the spirit of *yagya*. Those who have an individualistic attitude perform deeds with motive. (*Chp.3, shlokas 10-14*)
13. Know that all *karmas* originate from *Brahm*; *Brahm* Himself is born of the Indestructible Essence; therefore He Himself abides in all deeds performed as *yagya*. (*Chp.3, shloka 15*)
14. He who does not perform *karmas*, lives in vain. (*Chp.3, shloka 15*)
15. Perform all the daily deeds incumbent upon you well and without attachment. The detached individual attains the Supreme Lord even whilst performing actions. (*Chp.3, shloka 19*)
16. Despite being devoid of selfish motive, I too, perform deeds. (*Chp.3, shloka 22*)
17. Actions are performed by *gunas*. Doership is the *guna* or attribute of the foolish and the ignorant. (*Chp.3, shloka 27*)
18. I have no desire for the fruits of action, therefore actions do not bind Me. (*Chp.3, shloka 14*)
19. He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, sees the truth. (*Chp.4, shloka 18*)
20. Those deeds, which are devoid of desire and resolve, are *karmas* which are annihilated by the fire of knowledge. (*Chp.4, shloka 19*)
21. He who seeks no support, who is ever satiated, who is devoid of any desire for the fruits of action and who is rid of attachment, abides in inaction even whilst performing all deeds. (*Chp.4, shloka 20*)
22. One who is unhampered by the mind and who performs all deeds only with the gross body, does not incur sin. (*Chp.4, shloka 21*)

23. All *karmas* of those *Yogis* are destroyed, whose every action, devoid of attachment, is a *yagya*. (*Chp.4, shloka 23*)
24. Those *Yogis*, who partake of the 'sanctified remnants' of *yagya* and detached action, attain That *Brahm*. (*Chp.4, shloka 31*)
25. All actions performed as *yagya* and devoid of attachment, attain their culmination in *gyan yagya* or the *yagya* of knowledge. (*Chp.4, shloka 33*)
26. He who is the Self of all beings performs all deeds, yet is not touched by those deeds. (*Chp.5, shloka 7*)
27. He who performs all deeds as an offering to the Lord and without attachment, is not vitiated by action. (*Chp.5, shloka 10*)
28. The *Yogi* renounces attachment with the mind, intellect and the sense organs and strives for self purification through action. (*Chp.5, shloka 11*)
29. The *Yogi* attains bliss through the renunciation of the fruits of action. The one filled with desires craves the fruits of action and is thus fettered. (*Chp.5, shloka 12*)
30. The *Yogi* renounces all deeds mentally and abides in bliss. (*Chp.5, shloka 13*)
31. Doership, deeds or the endowment of the fruits of action are not wrought by the Lord. These are the spontaneous consequence of the nature of *gunas*. (*Chp.5, shloka 14*)
32. They who are established in equanimity, abide in That *Brahm*. (*Chp.5, shloka 19*)
33. He who performs all incumbent deeds without the desire for their fruit, is a *sanyasi* and a *yogi*. (*Chp.6, shloka 1*)
34. *Karma* is the only aid to *yoga*. (*Chp.6, shloka 3*)
35. One who is devoid of attachment to sense objects and to deeds, is established in *yoga*. (*Chp.6, shloka 4*)
36. The four types of the Lord's devotees are all performers of noble deeds. (*Chp.7, shloka 10*)
37. Those four types of devotees, whose sins have been annihilated through their meritorious deeds, worship Me. (*Chp.7, shloka 28*)

All this proves that gross actions have no potency. The desire for the fruits of action causes bondage. A selfless attitude, devoid of any motivation for the self, renders one's actions free of bondage and imbues them with the spirit of yagya. If the mind is attached to those sense objects, it becomes a 'bhogi' or an enjoying participant – if it is absorbed in the Atma, it becomes a yogi. Actions must be performed but always selflessly. This is the path to salvation and this is the mark of the one who is eternally united with the Supreme.



The Play-way Method

ARPANA ARCHIVES



Param Puja Ma has called her method the 'Play-way Method' because it does not involve any set disciplines. Live an ordinary life and try to forget oneself in work, which it is our duty to do, and thus enlarge our horizons and give up our reactions.

To help us to do this, we are given all sorts of jobs, both big and small, regardless of our likes or dislikes. In this process we try to see ourselves with an objective Intellect, strengthened by the guidance we

receive from Param Puja Ma. Little by little, the mind is to be brought around to accept the path, which the intellect has chosen.

Param Puja Ma says that we must learn to love the mind. Her own journey to ultimate self-realization involved a continual dialogue with the mind, to try and convince it where its best interests lay. This does not mean that we have to think in terms of self-control: we only have to shift the focus of the mind from its present likes to a new ideal.

Our likes have changed, and the mind, becoming indifferent to its previous emotional 'love affairs', becomes attached to a new 'love', and the process does not involve a sacrifice as it is commonly thought. The attachment and the desires can only be changed from one set of values to another set of values, they cannot be given up; when the mind is attracted towards something else, they will change automatically.

We have to become expert psychologists because we are searching into the movement of the mind: that mind which is both an impediment in the path and yet the sole means of arriving at the door of the Truth. Here we have an excellent opportunity to study our own mind and its reactions, and at the same time to study the mind of other persons in our daily dealings.

Param Pujya Ma has said that the more advanced a *sadhak* becomes, the less he will protect his reputation. "As long as a man is concerned about establishing himself, 'I' will make any sacrifice to protect his reputation from others and from himself; but if he is true seeker, not only will 'I' not protect his reputation, 'I' may even place him in a situation where his reputation will suffer."

The Play-way Method aims at taking us out of our illusions, egoity and separate individualism, attachment to one's body, mind and so-called intellect, not by going into seclusion and practising *dhyana* on some form or idea, but by leading our normal life in the world and yet taking every opportunity and chance to make our body serve others to perfection (*nishkam karma*), the

mind to give solace and love to others and the intellect to think and plan for other's interests, taking our cue from the Scriptures and the lives of the Prophets.

While doing so our mind, being outsmarted in its direction, will try to exploit even our *nishkam karma* by taking credit for all that, and feeling superior to 'others'. We have to be extremely vigilant, because the purpose of the Play-way Method is to come out of our egoism, and not to get more entrenched in it: for the egoism of those who do *seva* can be more powerful than that of wrongdoers who feel guilty and to that extent cannot justify their 'I'.

Param Pujya Ma says, "What you need is absolute intellectual, emotional and gross freedom. If you like me, you should cultivate those qualities in yourself. If you become like me, you will be my Self – that comes only in freedom and not in bondage."

Param Pujya Ma's method is to give the *sadhak* that experience which will give him a practical understanding of the *gyan* which he hears from the *Shastras*. At the same time, the initiative lies solely with him; his intellect remains free to give obedience or not, as it pleases him. The *sadhak* is not expected to accept without question all that Ma has said or done. In fact, she has always told us to use our own intellect and find out.

How successful has this experiment been – whether it is possible for an individual to practise spirituality in total freedom – is now for the world to judge! ❖

THE INFINITE LORD

ADAPTED FROM PARAM PUJYA MA'S ELUCIDATION OF THE JAPUJI SAHIB
BY ARUNA DAYAL



अमुल गुण अमुल वापार ।
अमुल वापारीए अमुल भण्डार ।
अमुल आवहि अमुल लै जाहि ।
अमुल भाइ अमुला समाहि ।
अमुल धरमु अमुल दीबाणु ।
अमुल तुलु अमुल परवाणु ।
अमुल बखसीस अमुल नीसाणु ।
अमुल करमु अमुल फुरमाणु ।
अमुलो अमुल आखिआ न जाइ ।
आखि आखि रहे लिव लाइ ।
आखहि वेद पाठ पुराण ।
आखहि पड़े करहि वखिआण ।
आखहि बरमे आखहि इंद ।
आखहि गोपी तै गोविंद ।
आखहि ईसर आखहि सिध ।
आखहि केते कीते बुध ।
आखहि दानव आखहि देव ।
आखहि सुरि नर मुनि जन सेव ।
केते आखहि आखणि पाहि ।
केते कहि कहि उठि उठि जाहि ।
ऐते कीते होरि करेहि ।
ता आखि न सकहि केई केइ ।
जेवडु भावै तेवडु होइ ।
नानक जाणै साचा सोइ ।
जे को आखै बोलु विगाडु ।
ता लिखीऐ सिरि गावारा गावारु ।।

पौड़ी 26

Essence of the *Shloka*:

His qualities are beyond price as is His dealing. His trade and wealth are infinite. Countless beings come to Him and take back gifts. His Love is infinite, and infinite are those who merge in Him. His justice is Divine as is His mighty Court, wherein the scales and measures of His justice lie.

His injunction and His Grace are both beyond definition. He is beyond definition. He is beyond measure – who can describe Him?

There are those who attempt to describe Him; those who recite the *Vedas* and *Purans*.

There are learned sages who preach about Him. Brahma and Indra praise Him. Krishna and the *gopis* talk of Him. Shiva and His devotees praise Him. Many are the learned men who praise him. The demonic and the Divine all sing of Him. Good men, servants and devotees all talk of His Grace.

All try to describe Him and yet no one out of these can describe His glories. He is the one Lord. He is the Truth and He alone knows His own Self. The man who says that he knows the Lord, is foolish and ignorant.

Param Pujya Ma's devotional praise of the Lord flows forth, as does the eternal flow of the Ganges:

*His qualities are beyond price,
infinite the measure of His deeds;
Beyond value, beyond knowing, is His dealing,
beyond measure, His qualities.
The devotee with devotion true,
is blessed with His grace Divine;
His Love is beyond boundaries,
as is the essence of His Name Sublime.*

Ma tells us that the Lord, in all His aspects, transcends all manmade boundaries and limits. His Grace, Justice, His Mercy and the Truth He embodies, all is beyond the pale of man's comprehension.

Thus when we, puny, limited beings seek to define and describe Him, we are bound to fail, because no one can praise He who is beyond knowing.

Gods, saints, sages and devotees, through the annals of time have been unable to describe His glories. How can He who is beyond measure, be bound by the measure of words?

His *bhaktas* sing His praise ceaselessly: others give up, for no one can gauge His splendour or bring Him into the grasp of language and into the boundaries of thought.

He is attained in the shades of yearning and devotion of the devotee. He can be known by the seeker, to the extent that the latter surrenders to his Lord. No description can evoke Him.

He alone knows Himself, who is Light; whose eternal essence is beyond our powers to grasp. Those men are foolish who imagine that the Supreme – beyond thought and boundless, infinite and eternal – can be defined in their limited language and understanding.

*O Lord, who can take Thy Name?
For beyond price and measure art Thee:
Who can describe or praise Thy glories?
Oh Guru mine, how can I know Thee?
Fathomless art Thee...*

*Beyond knowledge and thought are Thee, O Master
Who can sing of Thy qualities?
Beyond value, beyond price, O lord art Thee –
But who values Thee?*

*Yet the devotee full of yearning and devotion
Is blessed by Thy Grace and Clemency
You become manifest to Thy bhaktas
In the essence of their quest for Thee;
O Nanak, show me the way, that I, too, can rest at Thy Feet.*

Beloved Ma, steeped in the Truth Herself, cognizant with the Truth, in Her realization of it, guides us, and gives hope to the seeker –

*As much as you dwell on Him, to that extent you succeed,
Whichever form you adore, so, in His image you are steeped;
As vast as you believe Him to be, that vast is He for you,
As profound is your faith in Him, so will he appear to you.*

The seeker must know that the only Truth is the Lord's Name; then all the devotee's deeds and words will be eloquent with his Master's Name.

Such a seeker trades in Truth and his currency is constituted of the qualities imbued by his Lord's Name. He becomes incomparable as a 'trader' for his trade is that of Truth. He lives the essence of the Name. He worships his Lord with every devotional act and word.

Param Pujya Ma addresses the Supreme Lord in prayer –

Lord, You can neither be measured, weighed or assessed, for man has no measure to weigh Thee against! Yet such is the folly of this mind, it persists in attempting to do so.

*Thy justice is hard to bear, Lord,
so favor us with Thy clemency and mercy;
We are beggars at Thy threshold,
and for Thy kind favor, we offer our pleas.*

*Thou art forgiveness; Thou art mercy,
Grant us a drop, Lord, for Thy Name we plead;
Thou art kind to the poor and helpless,
Beggars at your door we kneel.*

*All we know is, that shelter you give to all in need,
For Thy refuge and protection and blessings we plead...
Void of knowledge or wisdom are we,
Only a place at Thy Feet, do we seek.*

*Gifted in song, devotees sing Thy praise
Full of emotion are their words as they pray –
Empty of such gifts are we,
Show us, O Lord, the way.*

*Merciful one, compassionate art Thee,
In surrender are we, at Thy Feet;
Master, only those devotees can reach Thee
Who have been blessed by Thy Mercy.*

Therefore O Lord, the true devotee has only one recourse – to pray and surrender to Thee.

*Again, and again we bow at Thy Feet
Our mind is fixed in Thee.
Wherever it wanders, then, it will encounter only Thee!
For truly, no one can bind Thee in thought:
No definition can be assayed,
Who can measure the infinite, for Thou art beyond our pale.
All we pray is that our lives
Be colored in Thy hues.
Thy word be obeyed, in devotion,
By Thy will, our minds be ruled.
If we become the dust of Thy Feet
We will be blessed in Truth.*

*O mind, know that your devotion will bear fruit
If the Guru Divine, allows you to abide at His Feet
Then by the Lord's Grace, will your life be imbued!*



May all beings have happiness...

*May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness;
May all be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow;
May all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is sorrowless;
And may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment and too much aversion,
And live believing in the equality of all that lives.*

~ A traditional buddhist prayer

Family



PURNIMA

What defines a family?

Blood ties... where each relation is given a name – father, mother, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, an ever-widening circle of cousins – once/ twice/ thrice removed, grandparents, grand uncle and aunts – the list continues – even as the ‘related by blood’ part of it is diluted as you go further and further...

Relations forged through marriage... mother in law, father in law and so on and so forth...

Lineage... who is whose descendant is all plotted on the family tree, its branches extending to include second marriages and half brothers and sisters, as also the record of who is alive and who is deceased...

Genes... who resembles who and how the son’s bulbous nose is a throwback to the great aunt on the mother’s side... including inherited diseases and allergies and what not!

And the ultimate test – the DNA – the profiling of which gives the final stamp of authenticity to any claims / rebuttals in ‘related’ matters... even extending to inheritance issues.

What does one associate with a family?

Common upbringing... imbibing the same values and beliefs

Shared spaces... eating, sleeping, playing together

Similar concerns... regarding an older member’s health or a teen’s growing up pangs

Joint experiences... be it celebrations, outings or sorrows

Shared responsibilities... from taking decisions to lending support

The Arpana Family

We, at Arpana, have always called ourselves a ‘family’, even though we do not fit the standard definition of a family. Yet this family, which came into being when people from diverse cultures came to Arpana drawn by the spiritual aura of Param Pujya Ma, displays all the hallmarks associated with a traditional family. Undoubtedly smaller family units exist in the larger conglomeration of people who form Arpana, but the only ties that keep everyone together are ties of love, unrelated by blood.

While it is easy enough to say “the whole world is our family”, people clash at every step when views don’t match and each one wants the right of way. It is only in a Utopian world that “the lion and goat drink water from the same river” as they say. **And yet, Ma made this Utopia possible.** People who had no common ground but their faith in Ma and the life she advocated, not only peacefully co-existed but were so driven by her philosophy of love and service that they flourished, as did the institution they served.

People here are happiest serving others. Everyone does everything for their own families the world over. But it is rare to find such a support system as we have in Arpana. Night or day, everyone is on call at all times if any need arises. This is the most beautiful part of all. There are so many people to depend upon... whether the need is emotional, financial or health related.

Giving children the right values has been part of Arpana’s ethos. Sharing their toys as well as the love of their parents, they have learnt to stand up for each other and also happily participate in all the activities. Meals are cooked in a common kitchen and eaten together by all, without any fuss or pandering to individual tastes.

And yet Ma ensured that her children did not become dry and humourless. She would suddenly call everyone in the middle of the night for a surprise party. She would take the whole family out for picnics and break into a song and dance sequence, prompting everyone to follow suit. From story sessions on cold winter evenings, snuggling in a warm family-quilt to bathing in the rain, she gave us ample occasions for fun and games.

We have learnt much and we have much to be thankful for. Ma as the Mother, the head of our family, has been our true friend, guide and spiritual anchor. Now it is up to us to take her legacy forward. ❖

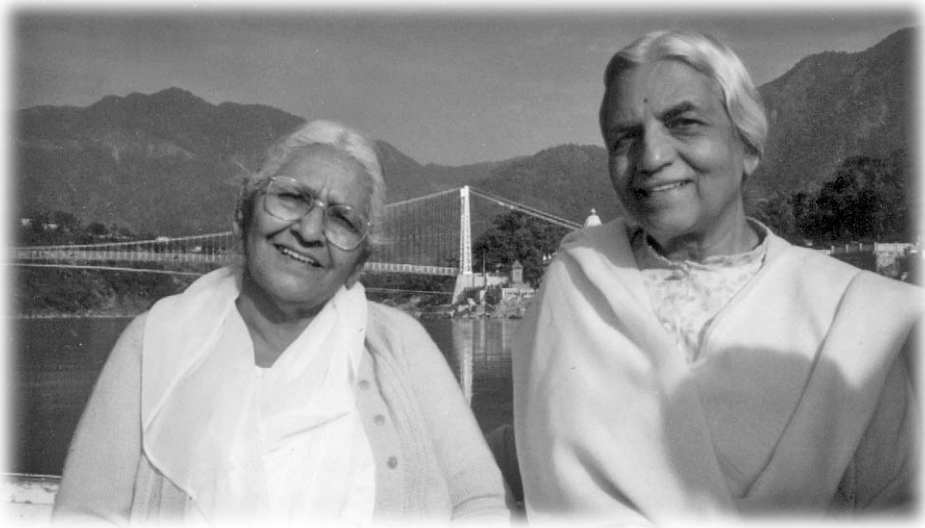


Ganga Ma...

TRANSLATED BY ABHA BHANDARI

The Ganga is Purity Itself and purifying. In this day and time, when so much is being said about 'cleansing' the Ganga, let us pause and consider... Despite pollutants being added by the day by human beings like us to this wondrous flow of Purity, Ganga retains Her essential character. How can She purify us despite being filled with pollutants? The answer lies in the attitude we bear towards Ganga. If we personify Her as our Divine Mother, to allow Her to be the receptacle of pollutants would be a crime indeed. Looking upon Her as our Mother prepares the ground for our purification.

Param Pujya Ma on one of her journeys to Haridwar, accompanied by Mrs. Kamla Bhandari, sang to Ganga thus...



*Ganga, O Ganga, we have come from far,
to meet Thee Mother Divine
O come to meet us now we beseech,
we are but children Thine.*

*You beckoned, so I came to Your feet,
with love in my heart I entreated...
Your compassionate heart my tears received,
You could not bear my pain and granted relief.*

*In Your waters my tear drops mingled,
as I yearned for the purity only You could bestow!
You streamed through my heart in a glorious flow
and saved it from separation's woe.*

*What can I give You today, You gave Ram to me,
I came to worship at Your feet, His Grace You showered on me.*

*Oh what can I offer to You, I bow my head to Thee
I call out Thy name repeatedly, in the hope that You will meet me.*

*Accept my homage I now beseech, Thy blessings I have received
Ever residing in my heart, Your imprint within ever grows...*

*O Purifier, Giver of Love! Your qualities to me stand revealed
I have received Your purifying touch, Your love within me is sealed.*

*O Offspring of the mighty Shiva, His qualities from Thee ever flow,
Shiva imparts His Divinity to his devotees, His Divinity from You does flow.*

*You are compaasionate O Mother Divine, taking all in Your embrace
Let each pore of mine remain Thine, O Mother, shower Your grace!*

*What can I ever give Thee, O Ganga what else can I say?
Whatever I am, howsoever I am, I am wholly Yours today.*

*O Giver of immortality and boons sublime,
I know that You transform all impurities into Shiv-like qualities...*

*I have come today to Thy feet in humble homage to Thee
Whatever I am today, O Ma, my life is a boon from Thee.*

*Silently You reveal the Truth, what can I offer to Thee?
O Ma, what can I give to You which You have not already given to me?*

***Upon hearing Ma's eloquent offerings to the Divine Ganga, Mrs. Bhandari
was overcome with devotional fervour, and asked Ma, "Then what should I
do? Teach me how to look upon Ma Ganga..."***

In reply, Ma again began to sing to the Ganga:

*Oh Ganga You are Purity Itself, how did You this purity attain?
I too long to be like Shiv, how did You call out His name?*

*Each moment He intakes venom, His neck with snakes infested,
Yet, filled with love, He harms none, His being in Divinity vested.*

*We ignorant beings ignore Him oft, and often consciously resist
With foolish talk and acts uncouth, injuries we inflict...*

*Taking shelter under repeating His name, our viciousness we hide
We harm His loved ones and in ignorance we abide.*

*Yet He smiles, His compassionate heart for each individual cares
If you want to be like Him, then to Ganga make this prayer...*

*If you want mere establishment, do not speak to Ganga in vain
If however you desire to emulate Shiv, plead with Ganga again.*

*Your desire must reflect the Truth, then to the origin go...
If you want to be like Shiv, to Ma Ganga you must bow.*

Then, as an ode to Her Divine Mother, Ma smilingly continued to sing...

*Carefree, singing, laughingly – lo! there goes the Ganga
Full of love, singing love's song – lo! there dances the Ganga!*

*Swayingly She streams Her way, at times with pride swelled...
If you view Her with eyes of love, with love you too will flow...
Lo! there flows the Ganga!!*

*She fills one's life with love sublime, one's mind with knowledge pure,
And when this mind by the intellect is guided, one's happiness is secure.*

*Rising and tumbling She sways along, gurgling and gushing all the way
Then smiling softly at Her own feat, She silently goes Her way...*

*Look upon Her with love in your eyes – a fountain of love She'll become...
If deceit in your heart you bear, a stream of tears She will become... ❖*





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