



## *Release*

*When invited to see the animals encaged,  
My timid heart withdrew;  
This bodily cage came to mind,  
An apprehension within me grew.*

*Those creature's ceaseless attempts to escape,  
Spring from their desire to be free:  
Whereas I, the unfortunate prisoner,  
Find pleasure in captivity.*

*The one with wisdom understands,  
And escapes from sorrow's crease;  
I, the pitiable captive,  
Do not even seek release!*

पिंजरा देखन् सब चलीं

पिंजरा देखन् सब चलीं, मोरा जिया घबराये।  
कहीं पिंजरा देखकर, पिंजर याद न आये॥

यह जन्तु बहु भागला,  
निकलन् मन तड़पाये।  
मैं जन्तु अभागिनी,  
निकलन् से घबराये॥

वह ज्ञानी तो जानया, निकले दुःख हर जाये।  
मैं मूढ़ा अभागिनी, पिंजर में भरमाये॥

*I used to believe  
that prayer changes things,  
but now I know that prayer changes us,  
and we change things.*

~ Mother Teresa



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# Action - A Manual

FROM PARAM PUJYA MA'S ELUCIDATION OF THE SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA  
AS EXPLAINED TO ABHA BHANDARI

**We engage in action through every moment of our lives...**

**We have been gifted with a span of human life to enable us to elicit the true purpose of life...  
How many of us pause to consider how many moments we have spent in meaningful action?**

**What is action? What is inaction?**

**What sort of action takes us towards our ultimate purpose?**

**What action takes us away from our purpose?**

**Param Pujya Ma, in Her compassionate identification with an ignorant young child questioning her, elucidates with complete clarity here how we must act in order to not only attain our spiritual goal, but in order to achieve success in what we do.**



Arjuna asked of Lord Krishna, “Is knowledge superior or action? What is the sort of action we must engage in?” Lord Krishna specified that Actions were imperative. The *Jiva* must act as the liberated souls act.... with their Supreme Goal in mind always, their life becomes a beautiful garland of selfless deeds, every action as blemishless as a pure pearl – unique and luminous with divinity!

The Lord exhorts Arjuna, “Emulate the actions of the ancient seekers. Arise and fight!”

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।  
तत्ते कर्मप्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥

Chapter 4, shloka 16

**What is action and what is inaction – even men of wisdom are confused over this issue. I shall explain to you the truth about action, knowing which you will be freed from its evil, binding nature.**

What is action and what is inaction, this has puzzled many intellectuals and men of wisdom. Learned *pandits*, scholars and even those with great spiritual insight have not found the answer. This subject confuses all.

1. It unsettles the mind by arousing *moha*.
2. It blurs one’s understanding of factual truth;
3. It makes the untrue seem like the truth;
4. Due to a lack of understanding of this subject, the individual performs deeds that are contrary to the Scriptures.

The Lord offers to clarify this baffling subject for Arjuna, knowing which Arjuna would be freed from ‘evil’.

For:

- a) the binding nature of *karma*;
- b) the fetters of desire;
- c) the bane of selfishness;
- d) the scourge of sorrow and duality

are all evil and harmful to man. The Lord offers Arjuna freedom from all these.

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।  
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

Chapter 4, shloka 17

**The Lord says:**

**One must know the truth of *Karma*, *Akarma* and *Vikarma* (action, inaction and negative action); because the course of action is mysterious.**

Little one, first understand the meaning of ‘*karma*’ as given in the Scriptures.

***Karma***

1. Actions enjoined by the Scriptures.

2. Actions performed in the spirit of *yagya*.
3. The actions of an *Atmavaan* and all such actions that take one towards the state of an *Atmavaan* and union with the Supreme.
4. Actions that free one from sin and *moha*.
5. Deeds that take one towards selflessness, detachment and freedom from the attitude of doership.
6. That which transforms one's life into a selfless worship.
7. Actions which render one's life a *yagya*, a devotional offering.
8. Those deeds which eradicate the thought of 'I' and 'mine'.
9. That which annihilates the doership attitude while performing deeds is true action.

### **Vikarma – Negative actions**

1. Selfish actions, contrary to *yagya*.
2. Actions that augment the body-related intellect.
3. Actions that are contrary to a divine attitude and conducive to a demonic attitude.
4. Actions motivated by greed and desire fulfilment; actions that pander to one's likes.
5. Actions that inflate one's ego and increase one's attachments.
6. Actions that promote pain and mental disturbance.
7. Actions that degrade one, rather than improve one as a human being.
8. Actions that augment ignorance and the sentiment 'I am the partaker and the doer'.
9. Actions which sway one away from the path of duty and *dharma* and blind one to the difference between *dharma* and *adharma*.

### **Akarma – Inaction**

1. One who abdicates both *dharma* and *adharma* and foolishly sits back, dwells in *akarma*.
2. Abandoning duty without a care is *akarma*.
3. Abandoning of both the spiritual and the materialistic paths – *shreya* and *preya*, is *akarma*.
4. Those with a *tamsic* attitude abide in *akarma*.

Another view: *Bhagwan* has said that a person cannot evade action even for a moment (*Chp.5, shloka 3*). In this respect, *akarma* will have another connotation which the Lord clarifies later. *Karmas* are virtuous actions and *vikarmas* are vile, debased actions. The Lord has also said that all actions are controlled by *gunas* which interact with other *gunas*. They are the motivators of action. Seen in this perspective, it is clear that the classification of actions has some meaning only so

long as the sense of doership prevails.

1. *Karmas* increase one's *satoguna* – the quality of *sattva*; they destroy ignorance and establish the individual in *sattva*.
2. *Vikarmas* increase one's *rajoguna* – the quality of *rajas*; they are based on greed, covetousness and desire.
3. *Akarmas* increase one's *tamoguna* – the quality of *tamas*. They are based on ignorance and promote laziness and sloth.

And yet:

- a) All gross actions are dependent on our qualities and are automatic.
  - b) Birth and death, name and form – all these are endowed by Nature (*Prakriti*) and the individual has no hand in them.
  - c) Qualities attract, repel, promote or destroy other qualities. In life there is constant interaction of the qualities.
1. Knowing this, all thought of doership will cease if one does not claim any deed to be one's own.
  2. One will transcend actions even whilst performing all actions.
  3. Nothing is gained by changing the arena of action – if attachment with action is annihilated, one becomes a non-doer.
  4. If attachment to actions disappears, then one will abide in *akarma* (inaction) even whilst performing action. One's life will then become a *yagya*.

### **Actions devoid of attachment**

If attachment does not remain:

1. no action remains 'one's own';
2. then even the body idea vanishes;
3. one has no selfish motive;
4. doership is eradicated;
5. when doership thus ceases, the distinction between *karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma* does not exist. Such a one is ever a non-doer.

Now understand this from yet another point of view:

Since all actions are instigated by the interaction of qualities, then:

1. It is doership that creates the seed for the birth-death cycle.
2. Attachment sprouts the fruit in the otherwise barren action.
3. Therefore it is essential to eliminate the idea of doership. Merely renouncing action will not lead to the Lord.

“I want to do this, I want to be that” – abandon all such thoughts and take

refuge in the Lord and His Word and act accordingly. Whatever you do, leave all to Him. Knowing that actions are a result of qualities interacting with other qualities, blame nobody. If you become devoid of criticism, it will not be difficult to transcend your body.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।  
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

Chapter 4, shloka 18

**Bhagwan says:**

**He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men and he remains established in Yoga, though performing all actions.**

#### **To see inaction in action**

Little one, who can have such a vision:

1. but a man who possesses wisdom regarding the *gunas*?
2. but an *Atmavaan*?
3. but one who has risen above the body idea?
4. but one who has transcended all the qualities and is established in the Truth?
5. but one devoid of attachments and ego?

#### **To see action in inaction**

1. If one is attached to abstinence from action, even then one has performed an action.
  2. If one has abandoned an action on account of one's attachment, that attachment becomes an action.
  3. If one is perturbed at the imminent loss of an object, that mental upsurge is an action.
  4. Escape from duty also constitutes action.
  5. Likes or dislikes give rise to attachment – therefore both are actions.
  6. Desire, anger, greed, all constitute action.
  7. The desire to cease performing an action or to persist in an action are both actions.
- 
- a) Attachment fills the sap of life into actions, such actions are *karmas*.
  - b) Even a lifeless deed becomes potent with the energy of attachment.
  - c) When you claim an action, it becomes 'your' action, 'your' *karma*.
  - d) In fact attachment is *karma*.

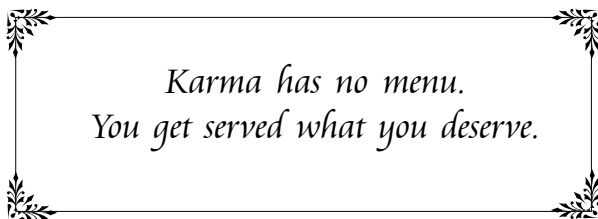
Thus, *karmas* are internal actions that bind you to the physical being.

1. The man of wisdom who understands this remains a non-doer despite doing all.

2. He who accepts this truth in life remains a non-doer and unites with the Supreme.
3. He has transcended all qualities and is a *gunatit*; he has transcended both action and inaction and is therefore a *karmatit*.
4. He is supreme among men.
5. The doership thought of such a wise one is dissolved.
6. He has transcended the body and even though he appears manifest, he is without form because he does not identify with his body.
7. One can call such a detached one an *Atmavaan* or a *Yogi*.
8. He becomes one with the Supreme because he has renounced all identification with the body and merged in the *Atma*.
9. He is the Lord Himself and engages himself in all actions.
10. All his deeds are selfless actions performed as *yagya*.
11. Having renounced his own name and form, all the names and forms of the world become his. Thus he identifies with whoever comes to him.
12. He works to fulfil everyone's tasks, but looks extremely ordinary.
13. He becomes a servant of those who love.
14. He is the wisest among the wise and seemingly the most ignorant among the ignorant.
15. He appears to be a supreme diplomat, but in reality he does not indulge in diplomacy.
16. Anyone can get his help in any job – he does all jobs, none is too big or too small for him. Fully identified with the other, he engages in all actions, yet he is not a doer. Working without attachment, he abides in inaction.

In short, all gross actions are controlled by the qualities, and thus are not actions but simply 'a play of qualities'. Then, even if one renounces gross actions and one's memory still dwells in those deeds, that is one's action or *karma*. Thus mental attachment is action.

Therefore, what the world calls action is, in fact, not *karma*; and what the world cannot see, i.e. the internal seeds of attachment and thought, that in reality is *karma*. The man of wisdom knows this and remains ever unaffected by the actions and the qualities of others.





# *A Seeker's Prayer*

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



आसणु लोई लोई भण्डार ।  
जो किछु पाइआ सु एका वार ।  
करि करि वेखै सिरजणहारु ।  
नानक सचे की साची कार ।  
आदेसु तिसै आदेसु ।  
आदि अनीलु अनादि अनाहति,  
जुगु जुगु एको वेसु ॥

पौड़ी ३१

The Essence of the Shloka:

***The abode and vast abundance of the Lord's stores are present in all the worlds. The Lord has created all aspects of the universe at one sweep. He gazes upon His Infinite Creation. O Nanak, He is Truth, as is all of His Creation. All homage to Him! Obesience to He who is the Beginning, and is without form or colour: who is without Beginning and is indestructible and immutable, since the beginning of Time.***

Param Pujya Ma, on behalf the questing seeker, dives into the mystery of the Divine Guru's utterance.

"The Lord's Presence and infinite abundance remain perfect and whole, through the wheel of time and the cycles of birth. In all the worlds, our Lord is manifest in all things, His Divine Presence extends through the entire cosmos.

In His One act does all creation come forth, full and perfect with His gifts.

The wise man knows that He is the Truth, as is the Truth which imbues the wonders of His Creation. Such a sage lives in the Truth and the Truth fills his heart and imbues his words and deeds.

Nanak, the Guru, tells us that it is only such a truth loving being whose actions are steeped in Truth, for he has no 'ego' no sense of 'me' and 'mine', which is the origin of falsehood and untruth."

Ma, as the devotee offers prayers to the Supreme Being:

*"May I enshrine the Lord's command, may I bow to the Supreme  
He is the Beginning and without Beginning  
He is Pure, Perfect and Whole; that Omkar may I perceive!  
Grant me the divine sight  
That Thy Glory I might behold!  
Grant me absolute devotion, Lord,  
Thy Lotus Feet I hold.  
Thy Blest Feet are the fount of Truth,  
May I remain at Thy Feet:  
May I enthrone them in my heart, I plead!*

*Thy Munificence extends to all, as does Thy Clemency.  
When the universe Thou dost create  
Thy wondrous gifts are disbursed in plenty:  
'Tis a wretch like me, who preens in vanity  
At the treasures that he derives from Thee!  
Yet in silence and compassion You watch, far apart,  
As pride and arrogance fill my heart:  
Lord, this proud ego will become mere dust  
If touched by Thy gaze, full of Mercy."*

Param Pujya Ma tells us how the Lord is an ocean of compassion and the Redeemer of sinners like us, who are in the grip of egoism and blind selfhood. It is Divine Grace and Mercy that can displace the pride of the ego, with devotion to the Lord filling the heart with prayerful supplication and desire for truth.

Ma tells of the willful and contrary nature of the human mind, brimming with obstinacy and folly. Man turns away from the Divine, spurns the Word of the Lord and disobeys His injunctions.

She offers words of prayer on behalf of the seeker –

*“O Lord, O Guru Divine, allow me the Refuge of Thy Feet  
Though art the shelter for the helpless: take me unto Thee!  
Thou dost cleanse and purify, Lord  
Wash away my impurities!  
Undeserving, false sinner am I,  
I plead for Thy clemency.*

*Thou art my eternal companion and friend  
I alone, did turn away from Thee:  
Thou, the fount of bounties infinite,  
I, in folly, spurned Thee each day!  
Omkar art Thou, O Sovereign Supreme One,  
I fall at Thy Feet:  
O pillar of light, my Lord art Thee  
Gentle and forgiving Lord, have mercy on me.*

*I crave for Thy benediction; the flame of Love  
Now burns within me:  
Grant me the boon of Thy Name I beg Thee  
O Nanak, Guru Divine, I have come to Thy Feet  
Take me in Thy Embrace:  
I have naught to offer,  
Only a mind full of attachment and ignorance  
Yet I long for Thy Mercy, I yearn for Thy Grace.”*

Param Pujya Ma depicts for us the poignant plight of the seeker, faced with the frightful dimension of his transgression and the blind folly of his egoistic self.

She turns in devotional humility to Nanak, Guru Divine –

*“I see my impure self and fear overcomes me;  
Hearing of Thy Compassion Lord  
I seek Thy intervention: redeem me, cleanse me  
I plead with Thee  
Efface the ‘I’, this selfhood, with Thy Name replace!*

*I have no knowledge how to please Thee  
The way of meditation, of wisdom, of reflection  
I do not know:*

I have no faith, no truth, yet I call to Thee!  
I have rejected Thee, Lord,  
Yet I dare to seek Thy Feet.

I have heard, O Beloved, Thou dost not spurn  
The sinner who pleads with Thee  
Thou art Forgiveness, Kindness, Compassion infinite:  
I seek shelter in Thy Light  
Undeserving wretch, yet I dare to take Thy Name!  
O Nanak, my Master, Thy Eternal Fame enfolds  
The universe entire; all is Thee:  
'Tis Thee I call, in all humility."

Urgency, fuelled by despair, at the darkness of ego filling the seeker's heart, imbues each word of supplication and devotional entreaty offered at the Lord's Feet:

"O Lord, O Master, do not say that You have bestowed Thy bounty and never taken it away: do not say that I am not Thine; that it was I who rejected Thee; it was I who turned away. Do not remind me of my trespasses and transgressions, Lord – that I am a sinner and so Thou hast turned away, knowing me for a fallen soul, that Thou hast no place for me.

O My Guru, O Nanak, do not close Thy doors against me, do not say that Thy divine Hand is not extended to me, worthless sinner that I am.

Thy eternal Love, Thy Ocean of Compassions is without end,  
O Lord, I come as a beggar, pleading for Thy Mercy.

A speck of devotion struggles to the surface of this darkened mind, a longing for a glimpse of Thee, assails me. O Lord, intensify this yearning for the Truth: fan this flickering flame of devotion: this wound in the egoity, sprinkle salt on it, my Guru, So that in agony, I call to Thee, again and again and again..."

So does Beloved Ma, in loving identification with the seeker, tormented by his own sins, offer prayers to the Lord, for His Compassionate intercession.

*"Sing the songs of joy to the Lord,  
serve the name of the Lord,  
and become the servant of his servants."*

*~ Guru Nanak*

# *Celebrating Lord Ram's birth...*



**On the joyous occasion of Lord Ram's birth,  
Chhote Ma put this question to Ma in Arpana's temple...**

**Chhote Ma:** “Ma, today is Ramnavmi, the day of Lord Ram's birth. As a great saint said, ‘Janam janam rati ram pad... yeh vardaam hoon maang’... I seek only the blessing of the dust of His feet...

**Ma:** This can only be said by one who says to the Lord, “Whatever You say Lord, Thy Will be done!” Then there is no room for ‘I’, for one's recognition or for seeking acknowledgment or respect for oneself.

In the Gita the Lord says ‘Mayi arpit mano buddhi’ “Surrender your mind and intellect to Me!” He assures us that if we do so, thereafter, He will protect our journey towards Him.

He has made so many promises... but we do not believe those promises. We do not value His Word. His Words are His feet... which we must not leave.

The stories we hear of Him are not

mere stories... they are the flow of His life.

If we believe He was right, then when we are rebuffed, unrecognized, spurned, even exiled... how can we cast aspersions on our detractors? Did He?

Say 'Ram' with all your heart... "O Ram, how can I live without Thee? So much happened in Your life, but you did not allow even a single crease of negative emotion to mar your heart with its presence! Amazing!

Did Lord Ram ever see happiness in the way we see happiness? Which moment of His life was replete with the sort of happiness we seek?

Lord! Today is the day of Your birth! How can we call this an auspicious day? For nothing transpired in Your life which we call auspicious! You were predisposed to so much torment and disrespect and spurning. In the same circumstances, we would be ready to annihilate our detractors...

So if you wish to be the dust of His feet, ask of Him: "Lord how did you live in such negative situations? How did you endure so much pain?"

Faith is not a belief that we will get all we desire if we believe in Him. You desire Him... yet you seek for self?

If you desire Him, seek his endurance. "Lord! You are so incredibly beautiful! Your life was a string of tears... yet can

we ever live the sort of life You lived?" We seek people's praise, acknowledgement, and eulogy always... we wish them to extol us, exalt us, even worship us! We do not even seek to see what He went through when He donned a human body... our eyes do not shed any tears when we hear his heart rending life story.

So this is a day of happiness... yet also a day of sorrow. We say "Lord, descend to earth for us..." yet, when will one recognize Him? Only when He endures our insults and disregard and rebukes again? For we hold that as a mark of Divinity!

Have we ever thought about the enormity of the situations He lived through? Have we ever thought how His mind would have been tormented? Have we ever thought that even though we all seek His Presence and His protection in our lives, do we intend to work towards becoming Pure like He was? Even if He protects us, we will still not be willing to do anything for anyone else. We would be selfish and self-centered, and learn nothing from His presence.

Even when we take His name –'Ram' – His name has never emerged from the heart. Had it been so, we would not have harboured *Raga* and *Dvesh*, attachment and repulsion, in our hearts. No sorrow would have touched us... we would never have rejected anyone. We would have defended even those who were our detractors.

From where can we get Ram's heart, which is prepared to give a lifetime to alleviate another's pain? And no one pays any heed to His pain?

If we cannot think like this, can we ever claim to have taken His Name? We claim so many things, we want to show that we take His Name day and night... yet, do we wish to become like Him? If not, then why take His Name?

A true devotee says "Lord, fill my life with sorrow, so that I remember Thee constantly. For, when circumstances are favourable, I am lost in my selfish pleasures and joys, and I forget Thee!" We seek Him as our servant... but we do not want to be like Him, think like Him, have a destiny like His!

So what better day than this, to dwell on His life? Bharat asked him for his wooden footwear when He was in the forest... and he gave it to Bharat without even considering that his feet would thereafter be susceptible to the pebbles, thorns and stones of the forest! If we had to walk without any foot covering for even 5 minutes, we would be in pain! Dwell on these small Truths of the Lord's life, and you will understand His Essence.

He is our Divine Lord, our Beloved Lord. But have we ever tried to become His beloved? Have we considered how He would have liked us to be? We entreat Him, "Stay by our side"... we appeal to

Him, "We wish to live in Thy Command"... But ask yourself truthfully, which are the qualities that you possess which will endear you to Him? Have you witnessed His Love, His compassion, His mercy, His Purity, the pristine beauty of His inner being? If we are not willing to emulate Him, how can we ask for the dust of His feet?

This is the right day for introspection. Can there be a better day, a more auspicious day to determine within ourselves? Lord! Let me return to Thee, become a part of Thee! There is naught but Thee...

I am distanced from Thee because of my own beliefs, convictions, likes and dislikes. With what face can I dare to ask for the dust of Thy feet?

Let me be Thy servitor Lord!

The irony is that we seek a return of even any act of service from Him! Can you imagine our degradation? Where have we reached!

Therefore, turn inwards and ask of yourself... what do I really want?

There is no day better than this day of the Lord's birth to acknowledge, "Lord, I am blinded by my negative emotions. Lead me away from this negativity, so that I can worship only Thee... know only Thee... and hold onto Thy feet always!





## *“You don’t Owe us a Thing”*

**This article, written by Anne Robinson in July 1982, beautifully describes how Ma opened her heart and home for her when she first came to Arpana**

*What can I give you? (my Lord asks me), I'll do my best to bring  
Fulfillment of your dreams, thereby erasing sorrow's sting.  
First you need sincerity; it's always here for you  
Come share our food and clothing, come share our shelter too...  
And know, your smile is payment enough  
So you don't owe us a thing.*

*You yearn for love and happiness, and for your heart to sing?  
You want a family who cares and loves, yet doesn't cling?  
Look – mothers, fathers, children too, live in this group of ours;  
Love, support and happiness are all within our powers.  
But since your joy is what brings us joy  
Then you don't owe us a thing.*

*You want to work? It's upto you, whatever you can swing  
You want your inner world alive and vibrant like the spring?  
Here is a heaven that you can reach, come joyfully serve with us  
Whomever we meet, however we can, the cost we never discuss.  
Serve others like this – we'll be so glad,  
So you don't owe us a thing.*





*You long to know the purpose of life's apparently wild fling?  
You long for life that intellectual clarity will bring?  
Here is a drama created for you, depicting your own Lord's life  
To guide you in everyday living, to transcend your turmoils and strife.  
But remember, we're only serving the Lord,  
So you don't owe us a thing.*

*You want to know of truth and faith and let your soul take wing?  
You want to have these in your life, the Lord to be your King?  
Original books describing the mind are here – the path that it trod,  
The way that it overcame obstacles to finally merge in God.  
But since this light is from the Lord,  
Well, you don't owe us a thing.*



*Oh Lord! I owe you everything,  
Why do you lie to me?  
My needs are fulfilled at your expense,  
You must pay the fee.  
Your body is worn out through serving me;  
I eat your flesh, drink your blood.  
And now you are taking my sense of debt  
And nipping it in the bud.  
I just realized O Lord Divine  
You lie to set me free!*

# *The Value of Life*

FROM THE INTERNET



*Steve Jobs was an American information technology entrepreneur and inventor, the co-founder, chairman and CEO of Apple Inc.*

*He was known for his rude behaviour as a boss and aloofness from his family.*

*His net worth was 7 billion dollars when he died.*

## **The last words of Steve Jobs**

I have come to the pinnacle of success in business. In the eyes of others, my life has been the symbol of success. However, apart from work, I have little joy. Finally, my wealth is simply a fact to which I am accustomed. At this time, lying on the hospital bed and remembering all my life, I realize that all the accolades and riches of which I was once so proud, have become insignificant with my imminent death. In the dark, when I look at the green lights of the equipment for artificial respiration and feel the buzz of their mechanical sounds, I can feel the breath of my approaching death looming over me.

Only now do I understand that once you accumulate enough money for the rest of your life, you have to pursue objectives that are not related to wealth. It should be something more important: For example, stories of love, art, dreams of my childhood. No, stop pursuing wealth, it can only make a person into a twisted being, just like me.

God has made us one way, we can feel the love in the heart of each of us, and not illusions built by fame or money, like I made in my life. I cannot take them with me. I can only take with me the memories that were strengthened by love. This is the true wealth that will follow you; will accompany you. He will give strength and light to go ahead.

Love can travel thousands of miles and so life has no limits. Move to where you want to go. Strive to reach the goals you want to achieve. Everything is in your heart and in your hands.

What is the world's most expensive bed? The hospital bed. If you have money, you can hire someone to drive your car, but you cannot hire someone to take your illness that is killing you. Material things lost can be found. But one thing you can never find when you lose: life. Whatever the stage of life where we are right now, at the end we will have to face the day when the curtain falls.

Please treasure your family love, love for your spouse, love for your friends... Treat everyone well and stay friendly with your neighbours. ❖



Param Pujya Ma

# Arpana

## Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,  
Karnal, Haryana, India

June 2016

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### ARPANA NEWS

#### Sadhana Day, Ram Navmi and Maha Samadhi Divas



Sadhana Day was celebrated on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at Madhuban. On this day Param Pujya Ma began her journey of devotional enquiry, elucidating Truths, long buried in our ancient scriptures. Even today, her words of knowledge and love inspire the listener to tread the path towards joy and freedom of the Spirit.

Ram Navmi was celebrated joyously with friends and devotees on April 15.

On April 16, devotees were drawn to Arpana Ashram to commemorate Param Pujya Ma's Samadhi Divas. Hearts overflowed with love and gratitude for her knowledge, blessings and guidance which have transformed our lives.

#### In Loving Memory of Pujya Chhote Ma

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the Arpana family lost our most beloved Pujya Chhote Ma. Taking up the reins of Spiritual teaching after Param Pujya Ma's Samadhi in 2008, Chhote Ma brought peace into troubled hearts and light into darkened lives as she explained Param Pujya Ma's message, embellished with her personal vignettes. At the first anniversary of her passing away, her memory was honoured at Arpana Mandir with family and friends.



#### The Birth of Arpana Canada

Arpana Canada has been officially registered for tax-exempt charitable status with the Canadian Revenue Agency, as of March 21, 2016. Donations can be sent by cheque in the name of 'Arpana Canada' to: Mrs. Sue Bhanot, 7 Scarlett Drive, Brampton, Ontario L6Y 3S9, Canada (+1-905-450-0184). Thank you Sue, Naman, Kerry and all at Arpana Canada!

# ARPANA HOSPITAL

## Dialysis Machine



All of us at Arpana are deeply grateful to our generous friends from Northern Ireland, who have magnanimously donated a Dialysis Machine to Arpana Hospital, enabling the treatment of chronic renal patients.

A **Cervical and Breast Cancer Camp** was held at Arpana Hospital on April 2-3. Dr. Ela Anand and Dr. Kavita Rani (Gynaecologists) and Dr Vivek Ahuja (Surgeon) examined 68 patients from 33 villages.

## HIMACHAL ACTIVITIES

### Sponsored by NABARD

1. The Saru Agricultural Institute conducted capacity building training at Arpana's Centre in Gajnoi on Feb. 27 for 35 members of the Farmer Producers Coop Society.

2. A two week training programme on Patchwork was organized at Arpana Centre, Gajnoi. 30 self help group women participated.



An **Awareness Workshop** held on Feb. 11 in remote Bhariyakothi Village, was attended by 35 SHG women, who heard Government's new schemes for educating their daughters.

### Free Gynae Camps and Operations



Dr. Hemant Sharma, Obstetrician & Gynecologist, did free Gynae check-ups for 36 patients in Feb-Mar and 11 free operations, sponsored by Arpana, at Satyam Hospital, Sultanpur, Chamba. A free Gynae Camp was held on 17<sup>th</sup> April at Chilli (Tissa) where he examined 121 patients and 8 were designated for free operations.

### A Free Endoscopy Camp sponsored by BN Bhandari Public Charitable Trust

Dr. Rahul Gupta, assisted by his son, Aman, conducted endoscopies in a camp at Arpana Health Care & Diagnostic Centre, Bakrota, Dalhousie, on May 20-21. The total OPD in this camp was 105.



## DELHI PROGRAMS

### Arpana's Vasant Vihar Community Centre – 'Rejoice'

Programs are being set up in Arpana's Vasant Vihar Community Centre, 'Rejoice'. Our goal is to make this a platform for munificent seniors to give back to society.

#### Musical Evenings at 'Rejoice'

To bring music to the community and to encourage young musicians, we have held three beautiful musical evenings:

A Sarod Recital by Shri Malhar Rakshit; a Recital by Dr. Aparajita Brahmachari and a Sitar Performance by Shri Adnan Khan.



#### Education for the Underprivileged



Classes have been started in 'Rejoice' for 22 bright underprivileged children 3 days a week in Spoken English & Computer Skills. With space for 7 classes, at 5 sessions a day, we need 35 volunteer teachers.

**Mr. BR Chawla**, who inaugurated the centre on April 8, has provided 8 Computers; another 3 computers and computer equipment were given by **BN Bhandari Public Charitable Trust** and 10 good used computers were provided by the **Embassy of Austria**.

#### English Workshops for Class XII Girls

25 underprivileged Class XII girls attended a workshop, April 22 & 23, held by Mrs. Kiran Bhatt, a founder of the CBSE English curriculum, culminating in a month long project, drawing self portraits and poignantly articulating their dreams.

A **Home Entertainment Centre** was inaugurated on 4<sup>th</sup> May by donor Mrs. Barbara Mahajan, to teach while entertaining children.

#### Interactive Nutrition Session

Eminent Nutritionist, Mrs. Veena Aggarwal, held a lively interactive session on the latest discoveries in nutritional health.



#### Meetings of Interest

1. The Gracious Living Foundation
2. Mrs. Neelam Mohan, Founder of Panchvati, a lovely home for the elderly.
3. HCSA, with Heidelberg University, Germany, interested in the elderly.
4. Mr. K.M. Noordeen, founder of the largest Hospice organisation in India.

## Haryana Rural

**Celebrating Women's Day:** "We are going toward the light, after a long night!"



A mounting sense of self esteem, hope and dignity arose in over 7,000 women members of Arpana self help groups. On Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> they organised a celebration for Women's Day and their achievements, in village Kutail.

**Ms. Manjari**, IG Police, exhorted the women to continue to build on

their strengths. The Mayor of Karnal, **Mrs. Renu Bala Gupta**, applauded the confidence, joy and energy of the women. **Mr. Kalyan**, MLA, congratulated the women on crossing the abyss of poverty. He also led the women in a pledge against oppression and gender bias and to continue to stand for social justice.

### Handicraft Sale at Chandigarh

The eagerly awaited Arpana Handicraft sale was held from March 18-20 at Aroma Hotel, Chandigarh. The amount generated from the sale will help disadvantaged women earn a livelihood and alleviate poverty.

Arpana trains rural women in quality hand embroidery, and markets the goods produced. These beautiful products are also sold at Arpana's New Delhi outlet, 'Devotion', E-22 Defence Colony, and its shop at Arpana, Madhuban, Karnal.



*We, at Arpana, depend on your support for our 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**

Send contributions in USA to:

**AID for Indian Development, Mr. Jagjit Singh, 84 Stuart Court, Los Altos, CA 94022-2249**

Send contributions to Arpana Canada:

**c/o Mrs. Sue Bhanot, 7 Scarlett Drive, Brampton, Ontario L6Y 3S9, Canada**

**Arpana Hospital: 91-184-2380801, Info & Resources Office: 91-184-2390905**

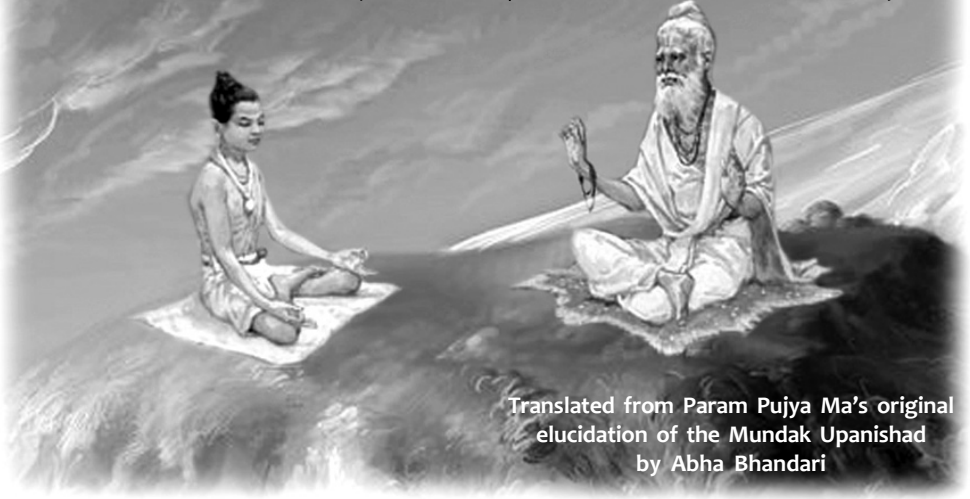
emails: [at@arpana.org](mailto:at@arpana.org) and [arct@arpana.org](mailto:arct@arpana.org)

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

**Mrs. Aruna Dayal, Director Development. Mobile 91-9873015108, 91-9034015109**

Websites: [www.arpana.org](http://www.arpana.org) [www.arpanaservices.org](http://www.arpanaservices.org)

# *Approaching the Guru for Supreme Knowledge*



Translated from Param Pujya Ma's original  
elucidation of the Mundak Upanishad  
by Abha Bhandari

**What are the necessary ingredients required for the Ultimate knowledge of Spiritual Union with the Supreme? What must be the attitude with which the disciple must approach his Guru? What are the pre-requisites that a disciple must possess? Param Pujya Ma delves into the depths of this Upanishad, and we, in grateful acknowledgement, partake of the nectar that she has wrought...**

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ ।  
कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥३१॥

**The great householder Shaunak (possessed of an illustrious spiritual lineage) came to Maharishi Angiras in complete accord with Scriptural decorum and humbly asked of him, "Lord! What is That, knowing Which, all is known?"**

Elucidation by Param Pujya Ma

Once the great householder, Shaunak  
Came to his Guru Angiras  
Observing all spiritual etiquette,  
He sat at the feet of Angiras, in humble stance.

An urgent yearning lay in his heart  
A burning desire to know...  
An unfulfilled desire urged him thus  
... Thirst for the Supreme within did grow.

Shaunak, replete with Vedic knowledge,  
Replenished with the practice of Yam and Niyam,  
Whose very life was tapas embodied  
Whose mind was internally controlled...

He was equipped with the knowledge of Spirituality  
And could discern between Truth and Untruth...  
Knowing the illusion of this world,  
He could discriminate between the Real and the transient.

He had renounced naught through despair and sorrow,  
But stood established on the firm ground of joy...  
The aspirant who can renounce from the position of happiness  
That One is eligible for the Supreme.

Even when he renounces, he loses naught...  
He merely transcends all;  
Even whilst partaking of all,  
He relinquishes all from within.

Only one desire... one yearning remains  
And all else is renounced...  
Fame and defame are of no consequence  
Even their own self is renounced.

What then will they desire of the world?  
Even desire for them is an illusion ...  
Ego, attachment and mind are abandoned  
They cease to live in delusion.

Such jivas desire only Ram  
They yearn for Union Supreme  
When only one desire remains  
And the mind in that desire leans...

Finally, the question was asked...  
What is That Supreme Essence?  
What is That, knowing Which all is known?  
What is That Non dual Quintessence?

Asking thus, Shaunak sought to know the deepest...  
The final, hidden meaning of the Supreme  
He sought not mere knowledge  
But he sought Ram Himself, That Essence Supreme !

He sought not merely material knowledge  
But its very source...







He sought that knowledge, knowing which  
The Fount of knowledge is sourced.

When the Cause of all is known,  
Then the deeds of That One can be gauged  
What forms can That Cause accomplish  
Even this knowledge can be gauged.

Shaunak asked this question deep...  
He sought thus the Essence of all,  
In that one question, at one instance,  
He sought the Supreme knowledge of Ram.

Shaunak himself was learned in the Vedas  
He had attained all there was to know...  
Immersed in the Essence of the Vedas,  
He had meditated on Shruti and Smriti\*.  
(\*The source of all Vedic knowledge)

Despite this, he lacked practical experience  
Even though he was born to elevated Rishis  
Even though he had inhabited sanctified spaces  
And lived in the presence of Knowers.

Rishi Angiras possessed the ancestry of Brahm  
Shaunak at his feet paid homage;  
Seeking to gain Supreme knowledge,  
His obeisance to Angiras he made...

Seeking Truth in its essence,  
Seeking practical establishment in That Truth  
Seeking that the veil of ignorance is removed  
Seeking freedom from every hindrance and impediment.

Shaunak sought not theoretical direction  
He sought not theoretical speculation  
For the Whole Truth cannot be known  
Until one imbibes its practical connotation.

Such experience is not possible without the grace of the Guru...  
Such knowledge is not an external phenomena,  
Knowing that it was not an external experience,  
Shaunak had abandoned the external and come to his Guru.

He had searched for long, he had roamed for long...  
He had searched the Scriptural arena  
He had waded through varied beliefs  
Immersed in many a conviction...



He now knew that That One lay beyond Scriptural decree  
That One was not attainable through mere knowledge  
A Knower could possess knowledge and fame  
But this was not the route to That One...

When knowledge is attained to its zenith  
Then a mere silence remains  
At that time, no epithet is needed  
That Knower abides in the silence of completion.

At that point, he attains the Supreme,  
When his individuality is annihilated withal...  
Then that Seeker seeks his Guru's feet  
And from that place, he attains all.

He whose refuge is his Guru,  
Devoid of egoity, devoid of knowledge,  
Devoid of a hunger for recognition,  
He seeks merely his Guru's feet...

After annihilating his very self,  
He bows his head before his Master  
With the support of That Supreme Essence,  
He seeks That One's refuge.

He had, earlier, amassed much knowledge  
With his own endeavour and might...  
Many a time he had been immersed in Samadhi  
Yet, each time, he had retraced his steps...

Even after reaching the verge of mergence  
He had not been enabled to complete unity  
When his state of Samadhi concluded,  
He once again donned a subtle body...

Surely, he possessed knowledge,  
But Ignorance was not completely quelled  
He had qualified That One through words...  
But not lost himself in That Supreme resonance.

When his own efforts had failed him,  
He sought the feet of his Guru...  
He sought thereby to quell his self  
So he surrendered himself to his Guru.

His heart was replete with faith  
His thoughts worshipped his Guru





Having lit the flame of undiluted faith  
Ignited by the oil of his devotion...

That learned one put aside  
All thoughts of personal recognition or appreciation  
Having achieved a lot, meditated a lot  
Now he renounced all and came to his Guru...

The moment he laid his head at His feet,  
And questioned his Guru about the Supreme,  
He had lost his own identity  
And only his Guru remained.

He had approached the Guru in accordance with scriptural decree  
But knew only this course...  
That naught should remain 'cept his Guru  
This was the Supreme course.

Thereafter he left all to the Supreme  
He had linked himself to his Ram  
Repeatedly taking his Ram's Name  
He left all to his Ram.

No trace of doership now remained  
No thought of 'knowing' remained  
The pride he had of ability and strength  
Also no longer remained.

He came to serve at his Guru's feet,  
His Guru's command was the Supreme's command  
His Guru for him, was naught but the Lord  
At his feet, he renounced all individual pride.

The 'I' now no longer remained  
His Guru's Word would be his command  
When his personal self no longer existed  
His Guru's Word became his supreme command...

With this very question he approached his Guru,  
Who is That One ... Who is worthy of being known...  
Which is That knowledge knowing Which  
The seeker can know all?

How can one know That Knowable One?  
By surrendering oneself at His feet...  
By such surrender unity is attained  
Then who knows? ... And Who is known?



*In the most wonderful and exciting drama called LIFE, many unpredicted, unanticipated or unexpected incidents happen, which have a profound impact on us. These can also be called teachable moments, moments that bring about some kind of significant, positive change in our perception, and therefore, in our daily living.*

*For instance, where perception and understanding were hitherto clouded, the exposure to an event, an incident, a story, etc., could succeed in dispelling the clouds and bringing about a much greater clarity in understanding. Such a ‘teachable moment’ was experienced by me recently, of all things, through a WhatsApp message!*

## *Escape the Net of Maya or Illusion*

Having had the unique opportunity and privilege of being exposed to Satsangs and hearing of the *Shastras*, such as the Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Upanishads, etc., my understanding of the word ‘maya’ was never clear. Theoretically, it was known that maya meant illusion, created by our attachment to the body, mind and intellect.

Interestingly, there was a title to the WhatsApp message – Escape the Net of Maya! Out of the numerous WhatsApp messages that are received, this particular one captured immediate attention. It took several readings to comprehend, what to me, was a message of profound depth.

DEEPAK DAYAL



Once upon a time, there lived many fish in a pond. Every day, they would wake up in the morning with a dread – the fisherman’s net!

The fisherman would be there every morning without fail, to cast his net. And without fail every morning, many fish would get caught in it. Some would be taken by surprise, some caught napping, some could not find any place to hide, while some others, even though aware of the lurking danger, could simply find no means to escape the deadly net.

Among the fish was one young fish that was always cheerful. It had no fear of the fisherman's net and it seemed to have mastered the art of remaining alive and staying lively. All the senior fish wondered what might be the secret of this little fish. How could it manage so well when their cumulative experience and wisdom were not enough to save them from the net?

Unable to bear their curiosity and desperate to find a way to escape the net, all the fish went to this little fish one evening, and said – “Hey little one! We all want to ask you something. Tomorrow morning, the fisherman will be back again. Are you not scared of getting caught in his net?”

The little fish smiled, “No! I will not be caught in his net, ever!” “Share with us, little one, the secret behind your confidence and success,” the elders pleaded.

“Very simple,” said the little fish. “When the fisherman comes to cast his net, I rush and stay at his feet. That is one place that the net can never reach, even if the fisherman wants to cast! So, I never get caught.” All the fish simply marveled at the simplicity of the little fish's wisdom.




Similarly when we cling to Lord's Lotus Feet, we can escape the net of 'MAYA'.

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 7 *Shloka* 14 : “This divine energy of Mine, *Maya*, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

This little gem of a story produced an instant visual in my mind. The fish pond became my physical, emotional and intellectual world, and I, one of the senior fish. The fisherman became the Lord. The fisherman's net became the tentacles of attachment to my body, mind and intellect. The little fish became the ardent devotee, full of faith in the Lord.

This story seemed to open up a path of Light through the dark maze of *Maya* or illusion, which has hypnotized me, thinking the unreal, the temporary and transient to be real, and the real seem unreal.

The realization dawned that I should follow the example of the little fish, who unerringly and unhesitatingly, on the strength of its faith and devotion, escaped the clutches of this net of *maya* (a composite of all my attachments) by taking shelter at the feet of the fisherman (the Lord).

I have to continue living in this world of *maya* because of the deeds of my past life but there is nothing to stop me from strengthening my faith and devotion in the Lord, thereby escaping the net of *maya* (the illusion created by my attachment), as did the little fish. 

# *Of People*

## *...and their Destinies*

PURNIMA



***Your story may not have such a happy beginning but that doesn't make you who you are. It is the rest of your story, who you choose to be.***

~ From the blog of a Wimpy Kid

Every nano second a child, rather several children, are born... and yet no two babies are the same. The difference lies not just in their physical appearance but in their vastly diverse destinies.

The first prejudice is born if a child is deformed in any way, or doesn't fit into the expected framework of 'beautiful/handsome'. Then the family the child is born into. Is he/she going to be welcomed with soft linen, bows and ribbons, cradles and toys or will the child be delivered on a rough bed, winning the favour or disapproval of various aunties and uncles due to its gender? Will the child be spoilt silly with luxuries or will he roam around with a runny nose, playing unattended on the streets? Will the child get opportunities to flower and maximize her potential or will she remain discriminated against, falling prey to unscrupulous elements?

*Genes determine the child's caste and creed; family wealth determines his class; circumstances mould the child's behaviour... Unconsciously, but unrelentingly, the child absorbs the vision and values of his surroundings... and that shapes his future.*

If a child grows up feeling loved, seeing grandparents treated with respect and servants with compassion, he turns into a loving, respectful person, who gives

everyone their due place. But if he gets an environment where mistrust abounds and abuses hurled, he will, in all probability, turn into a tyrant and a pervert.

For most people life falls into a set pattern – the daily ritual of eating, working, raising children, meeting deadlines or following orders, and maybe an evening of relaxation or enjoyment. A man might terrorise his wife and children at home, but will meekly submit to his boss in office. There is no justification for a poor person to take to a life of crime just because he cannot meet his needs or for a person in power to exploit those serving him because he has the so-called ‘authority’.

The real trial, however, comes when there is a change in one’s outward circumstances. Loss in business, natural calamities, sudden illness or disease... and all one’s carefully arranged life can go askew! How does a person conduct himself in a crisis? Can he take what life deals to him with a smile and accept it gracefully or will he break down and give up or worse, will he blame others for his misfortune? This will depend on what inner resources he has built up in life.

And then there are those that break the boundaries, who set tough goals for themselves and then go about achieving them. Such people seem to forge their own destinies. They do not sit and wait for things to happen, they **make** things happen! And the world progresses due to these thinkers and visionaries...

...because in the final analysis we will be judged not by the wealth, learning or qualities we have accrued, but how we have spent these for the benefit of others.

***The pessimist complains about the wind;  
The optimist expects it to change;  
The realist adjusts the sails.***



# *How God came into my Life*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: BHARTIYA VIDYA BHAWAN

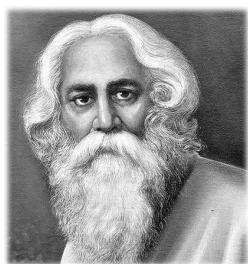
Saints and seers are scientists in the realm of the Spirit. They have 'experimented' with God and they have experienced Him. Some say they have seen God face to face as clearly as the scientist sees the things he deals with. They come to Earth for a brief sojourn and when their day is done, they return to the regions of the Immortals on wings of detachment and devotion.

When man walks towards God, God runs towards man. It is a two-way traffic... man's ascent to God and God's descent into the soul of man... Sometimes He comes to man invited by his prayer, but sometimes he invades man, lays siege to his rebellious heart and annexes it to Himself. None is so depraved or derelict as to be totally undeserving of God's Grace. To some He comes as a Voice or a Vision, inveigling them to find their heart and home in His own self. One cannot see how He will come, but sure as anything, He comes, He ever comes... if only man will keep his door open... or even if man should shut his door against God.

If the world today is not more sordid than it is, and if there is still hope of the survival of the values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, which are the substance of God, it is because of the procession of saintly persons who have walked with God and showed the way for others to follow.

## *The Vision*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



When I was eighteen, a sudden spring breeze of religious experience for the first time came into my life and passed away leaving in my memory a direct message of spiritual reality.

One day while I stood watching at early dawn the sun sending out its rays from behind the trees, I suddenly felt as if some ancient mist had in a moment lifted from my sight, and the morning light on the face of the world revealed an inner radiance of joy. The invisible screen of the commonplace was removed from all things and all men, and their ultimate significance was intensified in my mind; and this is the definition



of beauty. That which was memorable in this experience was its human message, the sudden expansion of my consciousness in the super-personal world of man.

The poem I wrote on the first day of my surprise was named, 'The Awakening of the Waterfall'. The waterfall, whose spirit lay dormant in its ice-bound isolation, was touched by the sun and, bursting in a cataract of freedom, it found its finality in an unending sacrifice, in a continual union with the sea...

I still remember the day in my childhood when I was made to struggle across my lessons in a first primer, strewn with isolated words smothered under the burden of spelling... Suddenly I came to a rhymed sentence of combined words, which may be translated thus – "It rains, the leaves tremble." At once I came to a world wherein I recovered my full meaning. My mind touched the creative realm of expression and at that moment I was no longer a mere student with his mind muffled by spelling lessons, enclosed by a classroom. The rhythmic picture of the tremulous leaves beaten by the rain opened before my mind the world which does not merely carry information, but a harmony with my being. The unmeaning fragments lost their individual isolation and my mind reveled in the unity of a Vision... I felt sure that some Being who comprehended me and my world was seeking his best expression in all my experiences, uniting them into an ever-widening individuality which is a spiritual work of art.

To this Being I was responsible; for the creation in me is his as well as mine. It may be that it was the same creative Mind that is shaping the universe to its eternal idea; but in me as a person it had one of its special centres of a personal relationship growing into a deepening consciousness...

I felt that I had found my religion at last, the religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and cooperation.

### *The Galilean Conquers*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

One day the idea struck me that God listened to Sri Ramakrishna's prayers; so why should I not ask him to pray for me for the removal of my pecuniary wants – a favour the Master would never deny me? I hurried to Dakshineshwar and insisted on his making the appeal on behalf of my starving family. He said, "My boy, I can't make such demands. But why don't you go and ask the Mother yourself? All your sufferings are due to your disregard of Her." I said, "I do not know the Mother, you

please speak to Her on my behalf. You must.” He replied tenderly, “My dear boy, I have done so again and again. But you do not accept Her, so She does not grant my prayer... go to the Kali temple tonight and prostrate yourself before the Mother and ask Her any boon you like. It shall be granted...



As I went I was filled with a divine intoxication. My feet were unsteady. My heart was leaping in anticipation of the joy of beholding the living Goddess and hearing Her words. Reaching the temple, as I cast my eyes upon the image, I actually found that the Divine Mother was living and conscious, the Perennial Fountain of Divine Love and Beauty. I was caught in a surging wave of devotion and love.

In an ecstasy of joy I prostrated myself again and again before the Mother and prayed, “Mother, give me discrimination! Give me renunciation! Give unto me knowledge and devotion! Grant that I may have an uninterrupted vision of Thee!” A serene peace reigned in my soul, the world was forgotten. Only the Divine Mother shone within my heart.

As soon as I returned, Sri Ramakrishna asked me if I had prayed for the removal of my worldly wants. I was startled at this question and said, “No, I forgot all about it. But is there any remedy now?” “Go again,” said he, “and tell Her about your wants.”

I again set out for the temple but at the sight of the Mother again forgot my mission, bowed to Her repeatedly and prayed only for love and devotion. The Master asked me if I had done it the second time. I told him what had happened. He said, “How thoughtless! Couldn’t you restrain yourself enough to say those few words? Well, try once more and make that prayer to Her.” I went for the third time but on entering the temple a terrible shame overpowered me. I thought “What a trifle I have come to pray to the Mother about! What a fool I am!”

In shame and remorse I bowed to Her respectfully and said, “Mother, I want nothing but knowledge and devotion.” Coming out of the temple I understood that all this was due to Sri Ramakrishna’s will. Otherwise how could I fail in my object no less than thrice? I came to him and said, “It is you who have cast a charm over my mind and made me forgetful. Now please grant me the boon that my family may no longer suffer the pinch of poverty.” He said, “Such a prayer never comes from my lips. I asked you to pray for yourself. But you couldn’t do it. It appears that you are not destined to enjoy worldly happiness...”

## *The Great Enlightenment*

SRI RAMANA MAHARISHI



In the middle of 1896, before I left Madura for good, the great change in my life took place. It was so sudden.

One day I sat up alone on the first floor of my uncle's house. I was in my usual good health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die and at once set about thinking what I should do.

I did not consult anyone, doctor, friend or elder. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there. The shock of the fear of death made me at once introspective or introverted. I said to myself mentally, 'Now death is come. What does it mean? Who is it that is dying?'

This body dies: I at once dramatized the situation. I extended my limbs and held them rigid, as though rigor mortis had set in. I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together so that no sound could escape.

'Well then', I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried still to the crematory and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the destruction of the body, am I dead? Is the body "I"? This body is silent and inert. But I am still aware of the full force of my personality and even of the sound of "I" within myself as apart from the body. The material body dies, but the Spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am therefore the deathless Spirit!'

All this was not a feat of intellectual gymnastics, but came as a flash before me vividly as a living Truth, which I perceived immediately, without almost any argument.

I was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with the body was centered on that. The "I" or myself was holding the focus of attention with a powerful fascination.

The fear of death vanished at once and for ever.

The absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right upto now.





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# Arpana Ashram

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