

What is the Purpose of Life? I wonder

*What is the purpose of life? I wonder... and ask myself this day,
Through service I can cut asunder my bonds – each sage of wisdom did say.
If I perpetuate my family, what do I gain? Each life I have spent this way,
I embellished each home – but merely in vain: each time I broke away.
It is only through service, devotion and care... that permanent freedom I'll find.
Oh, restless mind! come let us rove... till our path to His feet shall wind.*

*These gifts of wealth or worldly fame, can comfort me no more:
If a speck of dust from His path I claim, my freedom I'll ensure.*

Translated from Param Puja Ma's original prayer in Hindi given below



क्या प्रयोजन जीवन का

क्या प्रयोजन जीवन का, इतना ही रह गया ।
संत सेवा किये मुक्ति मिले, हर संत यह कह गया ॥

कुल बढ़ा तो क्या हुआ, बहु कुल बहु जन्म मिले ।
अनेकों घर सजाये मैंने, पर सब ही बिछुड़ गये ॥

संत सेवा भक्ति प्रेम, राही मुक्ति मिले ।
मन मेरे उठ आ चल दे, जहाँ परम की शरण मिले ॥

धन मान जहान मिला, तो मुझे है क्या मिला ।
मोक्ष राह रज कण मिले, परम मिल जायेगा ॥

(राम भक्त शबरी)

Treasures of Knowledge

The treasures of knowledge expounded by Param Pujya Ma are tremendous and inexhaustible for which mankind will ever be grateful. The basics of Scriptures have all been rendered in such simple language and style as to make it comprehensible, interesting and thought provoking for people of all ages and stages. The fallacious concept of the modern materialist that Scriptures are meant as a pastime for the old and degenerating is given a go by. Param Pujya Ma propounds each thought so penetratingly and exhaustively as to convince a genuine enthusiast that religion is meant to be lived in day to day life. It provides methods of release from unnecessarily fostered complications.

This journal affords glimpses of what Pujya Ma has clarified to the Inquirer from time to time. Her immense bounty and Grace showered for the benefit of humanity, through effort, time and energy expended so magnanimously, makes us bow in reverence to a Supreme Human Being.

~ Editor

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Lord...

How infinitely blessed am I!

ABHA BHANDARI



*Lord, how blessed am I to live through these times...
These times when one is standing at the brink of phenomenal change...ill gotten
When Nature has taken us all in Her tender arms of love...
...and is feeding us with That Truth long forgotten...*

*When ambulance sirens resound day and night
Rending the silence of the night with its urgent message...
'Life is dear... death is near...'
...And I throw away the blanket of fear to embrace That eternal message!*

*...For is this not the ONLY reality that has been with me since the moment of my birth?
Is this message so foreign to me that I recoil at the thought...
...that the ambulance may be at my door... this very day...
...and that the next moment, a special message for me has brought?*

Where are those 'important works' for which I spent precious moments of my life
Endeavouring to garner little joys which always ran a trifle faster... always ahead of me?
How empty those 'hallways of joy' now seem... forlorn, meaningless, forsaken
Since a Truth far more vital... far more Real has now this entirety overtaken...

If I die today... will I rejoice or repent?
Will I be joyous at reunion with my Divine Beloved... or regret the time ill spent?
For the Lord whispered into my ear the moment I was born
"Child...I give you this life for a purpose..." a voice still-born...



"I gave you this life that you may find your way back to Me...
I gave you this life to strive only to know who you are...born of Me!"
"But Lord..." I said " You gave me so much more in my package
That I got lost in this mountain of 'toys' instead of searching Thee!"

Today You have given me another opportunity
Another reminder that life is not eternity
Lord, I pray, come before me today
And grant me a true vision of Thy Reality.

Let me see clearly that You are my only Beloved
That my happiness and rest lies in You only Beloved!
Sanitize me of this 'quickfix' of desire that binds me to the world
Wash, wash, wash, wash... how many more times do I need to be told?

Grant me the filter of Your wisdom that I may cognize...
With the nectar of Your knowledge, sanitize me Lord
What is of importance in this existence of mine... help me recognize
Let me see clearly my path ahead devoid of any interference Lord.

You sent me countless warnings... tsunamis, fires, earthquakes, storms
In my arrogance, I thought... 'these cannot touch me'... by others they are deserved
In Your compassionate protection, my conceit grew unrestrained by any norms
As did my self importance that grew with the conviction that I was specially preserved.

As now I take every precaution to filter all that enters my home and being
Why did I not filter the 'germs' of attachment that permeated my very core?
Unrestrained I sauntered forth... with egoistic haughtiness growing
...and in doing so, I nurtured millions of impurities within me even more.

Not even once did I stop to think... from Whom did this life come?
All this that I 'procure' endlessly... from Whom did this bounty come?
Like a marauder I looted every single gift given to me unasked
Considering it to be my well deserved right, my shadow 'pon it was cast.

Every other species was robbed of its beauty by me
In doing so, I lost touch with my inner divinity
Lord, I now pray for an inner transformation
...To be one with Thee Lord... a strong affirmation!

I know You will forgive as You have done always
But through all life's days, let me never forget this day
Let me view the end of life with the clarity I do now
So that I never forget That Sun of Whom I am an infinitesimal ray.



Because of You, Ma



Because of You, Ma

*My parents shifted to Madhuban... and I came to live at Arpana
My son and I got a whole new family because of You;*

*The daily discourses in the mandir made life more meaningful
Satsang is what you practice in life, we learnt because of You;*

*You instilled such enthusiasm in us all
That service became a joy, because of You*

*Consulting, contributing, cooperating became our work ethos
We learnt to give and share because of You;*

*Whenever an emergency arose, the family rushed to help
Everyone knew they could count on Arpana, because of You;*

*‘Do not give dole’, you said, ‘teach the needy a skill instead’
People learnt to be self-sufficient because of You;*

*Yet life was not all serious, staid and boring
It was infused with love, laughter and happiness because of You;*

*The midnight parties, the impromptu picnics
There was friendship and camaraderie among all because of You;*

*You may not be with us physically in the here and now, Ma,
But your legacy endures... all because of You!*

PURNIMA

‘Namaste’



ANNE ROBINSON

Namaste. This means, “I salute THAT within you which is the same as THAT within me.”

I am a writer and, when requested, considered writing my own life story. However, I realize I am so many persons in one – which one’s story will be told?

And that is probably the *granthi*, the knot, of my life right there – the knot that needs to be untied before my life can flow forward in the most beautiful possible way.

Param Pujya Ma tells us that in order to find the truth, we have to be one-pointed in our desire for the Truth. The trouble is we not only want the truth, but we want everything else as well! Even when we intellectually realize that wealth, fame, power will not bring us true happiness and satiation within, we get distracted and dart off-track here and there, thinking we will get back to the truth very soon – how does it hurt to explore this or that point of interest?

The exploration can lead to a side of us that finds we can be a person enjoying the adulation of others, enjoying experiences off-track, desiring goods and services. Even while saying, “How can it hurt?”, we splinter into innumerable other personalities, following innumerable other qualities, losing

track of our main goal and – worst of all – strengthening our sense of individual worth, our ego, despite knowing we are the result of destiny.

We can see we are the result of destiny because, in our studies, we have seen that we are the result of the **qualities we are born with**, plus the **environment in which we are placed**, plus the **interactions we have with others' qualities.**

So, if we are a result of destiny – where is the place for the ego?!

Ego says, “But look what I did with what I was given. Look at my academic achievements! Look at my talents in the arts, in music, in drama! Look at the business I have built, the organizational ability that creates untold wealth! I can certainly take some credit!”

The Lord says, “Who gave you the capacity for intellectual acuity? Many are born with half the IQ you have and still achieve success – and you have the audacity to claim superiority? Many do not have the talents you were born with – and are still able to create worth. Many overcome handicaps and tremendous adversity and still achieve the joy and peace you can only see from afar. You see, you think you are the ego – and ego can never be satisfied. Nor can it ever see the truth.”

The Lord says, “My child, return to Me and you will gain abiding peace. You will live in *SatChitAnand* (TruthAwarenessBliss) forevermore.”

Fortunately, there is a place for the Lord's Grace – otherwise we would never be able to get out of the unreal world in which we live and find the world of *SatChitAnand* (TruthAwarenessBliss). I feel so fortunate to have come here and lived with Ma, been part of her family, been exposed to her life and her words (hers is the only life I have seen in which deeds match words completely) and have had so many of my questions answered.

That said, I have not been able to become one within – with one desire that I follow completely to the exclusion of everything else. Because when something does not work out well for me, I want to make it right for me instead of seeing what the Lord's Will is. For instance, I feel humiliated instead of seeing that what has happened is a consequence of the situation, what the other person understands and his own reactions. I feel other reactions for the same reasons.

So, what I do not have is the one-pointed desire to reach the Truth.

Instead I have lots of other 'points' of desire – desire for my own comfort, for my health, for admiration, respect, etc.

To become one within, I can have no other desire but the truth. I cannot superimpose my wishes on reality. Actually, I need to remove the superimpositions I have already built in my mind and intellect so that I can distinguish reality from the world created by my mindstuff.

To become one within, I need to see my life objectively. I need to be the witness of my life. For that I need to be detached – never be emotionally attached. If I am not attached to my body-mind-intellect unit, I will never act to benefit myself at the expense of anyone else. I will act for the benefit of the one who comes before me – and let the chips fall where they may!

The concomitant principle of seeking the truth is not acting for my own benefit at anyone else's expense. Ma always said that we must act for the good of the other in whatever way we can. This is because we are all children of God (the Source, the Energy, the Love out of which we are all created). Therefore, the truth is that we are given life, given qualities, given circumstances and family and friends and enemies – and we have not done this ourselves, we have been given these.

The truth is that the world is all the Lord's creation, all people are his children and, to be good sons and daughters of the Master of All, we need to do all we can to make those with whom we come in contact, happy or



better in some way – just like when guests come to our parent's house, we welcome them and assist them however we can.

The beauty is that, in serving the other, the humane qualities within us grow and flower. We find that assisting the one in need makes us feel more fulfilled and more at peace – whether we provide food, protection, clothing, housing, guidance, financial resources, emotional security or any other means to improve the life of another. And the more we are willing to act for the other, the more our compassion and love increase. And, finally, we see that we are not only acting for those with whom we have a personal connection, but acting for anyone with whom we come in contact who requests our assistance.

When we have no personal benefit from acting to assist another, our humane qualities are at the service of all of God's children. Humane qualities, embracing all without discrimination, is what God does – we call these Divine Qualities. The truth is that humane qualities which are extended to others without any egoistic motivation at all, become the qualities of God – the Divine Qualities.

Experiencing this truth, we strive to live with one pointed desire for truth in every aspect of our lives. We strive to become whole so that we never become splintered into multiple people! Then we are one, we are joyous, we are at peace and are ever living in the presence of Love!

So, knowing this, why am I still breaking into fragments, led astray by glimpses of comfort, or the desire to avoid difficulties?

I ask myself, how can I leave one of the Lord's children – my own brother or sister – to struggle and fail? Each person has the same Divine Awareness within and is showing me what I would do and be if I were born with the same qualities, into the same environment and situations. Each person is myself! How can I turn my back on myself in need?!

This world and all within it constitute the drama created by the Lord. I pray that the Lord's Grace will make me conscious of this great truth every moment of my life – We Are All One. We are all interconnected since we are created out of that One Awareness, which is the same in you and me.

I salute That within you which is the same as That within me.
Namaste.

Love Letters to Her Lord...



*~ A Blueprint of the
Aspirant's Path*

From the 2nd reading of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita
by Param Pujya Ma

"The unreal has no existence, and the real or the Truth never ceases to be..."

The only purpose of life is to know the Truth... That Truth which is everlasting, eternal, non destructible and Illumination Itself.

In His Infinite Compassion, the Lord has given us this 'chariot' of the human body to traverse every sphere through the body mind and intellect unit, to know that Truth. Knowledge of that Truth and abidance in it has the immense power to join us to our Real Self... and to experience the Sat Chit Anand which we truly are in Essence. We need to know that this body is nothing more than a chariot to take us to That true destination.

Yet we, because of our inherent tendency to cling to the material world, become attached to this body mind and intellect unit and endeavour to live life as though there is nothing beyond it. It is like a cataract which prevents us from seeing Reality as it is.

Lord Krishna takes Arjuna by the hand and explains to him the transience of this body and the Eternal Nature of the Atma, advising him to abide in That Essence which he truly is. Param Pujya Ma, in Her 'Love Letters to the Lord', explains this same principle in depth from the point of view of lost souls like us, who roam the earth with an erroneous perception of the Truth. Let us dwell on each word, meditate on it and seek only to abide in our Spiritual Essence so that we may, henceforth, live with a clear direction towards our Ultimate Goal.

ABHA BHANDARI

Chapter 2

In Continuation...

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥१५॥

The Lord now explains why we should take pleasure and pain in our stride, because:

O Arjuna, most excellent among men! He, who accepts pleasure and pain alike, a person of stable intellect who is not unduly disturbed by the objects of the senses, is capable of attaining immortality.

Shloka 15

Now the Lord is offering Agam Pramana... or scriptural evidence. He says... "What I am saying has happened in the past! Men have achieved this state... what a man has done, a man can do! So do not be disappointed or frustrated! The strong derive inspiration from the strong. This reinforces their enthusiasm to withstand even the toughest impediments.

O mind! The Lord is relating facts regarding the journey of those who have reached where you want to go! He says, "You do not know the rules of those who inhabit that abode... do as they did... and do!" Those who abide on that plane are far superior to me... why should I not do as they

do? Let me apply the dust of their feet upon my forehead! Regularly try to reach their heights and when you do, aspire for the next rank! There are 'ranks' even on the path of *sadhana*... just as the army personnel! As all officers aspire for and slowly reach the rank of the General... but all this can only happen slowly. The lower ranked officer learns from his senior! So also, the Lord teaches the first principle of the *sadhak's* world of *sadhana*.



Follow the footsteps of those who have travelled this path, and respectfully apply the dust of their footprints upon your forehead. O mind! Your 'family' has changed... your ancestry has changed. Now rules of that other family will apply to you. But first... help your mind to transcend duality.

Have you noticed O mind? It is not said here that such 'travellers on the path' attain immortality. It is said, 'they become capable of attaining immortality.' This is the first rung. The Lord Himself comes to receive you only when you reach the last rung of this ladder. You must walk on. The Lord's grace is with you... His compassion is your aide. You have a healthy, capable body. All your circumstances are favourable. O mind! Do not tarry! Hasten!

The Mercy of That One is all pervading... but the heart must be attuned... as the radio is tuned! Presently it is agonized in the storm. It should be like the lighthouse, which stands solid and firm, indifferent to the jostling and swirling waves that beat against it... without any disturbance. It is only when it is able to let go of all the so called '*dharmas*' of the body, that it will be able to become indifferent and tolerant of all. It is then that the *sadhak* can reach the last leg of his journey... the last rest house. That is when He, the Divine Beloved will come Himself to you.

But why should we worry about that at this stage of our *sadhana*? Let us try to reach the first landmark... no matter which path you take... the path of *gyan* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion) or *karma* (action)... The last stage is traversed with Him.

You must try now to deal with the objects of the world. *Karma* or actions are the chisellers... and constant practice shall lead to *Yog* or union.

The Lord Himself assures us: “Do not worry... look towards the *Rishis* of yore... You have been given citizenship of their state! If you don’t know their rules of conduct, come to Me. Or else make any of them your *Guru*... who will lead you on. They already know all about you and if you surrender yourself to them, and act in accordance with the fundamental rules of the land, they will themselves lead you on and make you proficient and well acquainted with their world. They will come and enter!



In this world, there is neither hunger nor thirst... neither happiness nor sorrow... it is devoid of all the problems that beset this body world. No agony! Just surrender yourself in the bright aura of His merciful compassion, and He will ensure that you reach your destination. O unfortunate one! Your very Goal has come to you Himself... waking you... taking you by your hand... and you are ignorant to Him!

He is Himself taking you around the other world to tempt you, to introduce you... Even now, begin to walk His path! All the *Rishis* of yore have their eye on you! Still you are afraid!

Rise! O fortunate one! Fall at Ram’s feet... and leave all else... go with Him!

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥१६॥

The unreal has no existence, and the real or the Truth never ceases to be; this has been perceived by all seers of the Truth.

Shloka 16

O mind! The Lord Himself is saying that all objects pertaining to this body and all dualities such as cold and hot, are temptations to lure you away from your goal. These are not stable, nor eternal. How can that which has no foundation, be intransient? How can that which can perish at any moment be considered eternal? Besides, how can that be eternal which is dependent on these organs of sensory perception? How can these images of clay claim to be eternal? They are mere images of dust. The Eternal... the Truth is That One Who is Immutable, and ever Stable. That One can never be destroyed. He is beyond limitations and changeless. The entire world is continually changing, therefore it is not the Truth... not That One. But this changing world too is dependent on That Entity Who is changeless and devoid of all imperfection. It cannot survive without That Support. That Support is Eternal and Indestructible... and pervading this entirety. Only That Support is true. All else is false. Truth is Eternal and untruth only superficial. Superficial because it can only be known via the senses and other modes of perception. All that comes in the orbit of this 'untrue' world was not there always... and will not be there always. It is there only in the middle or the present stage. Only the *Atma*, the Eternal Consciousness is ever pervading and eternal. The wise men realize and perceive That Truth which underlies all existence as the Eternal, Everlasting *Atma*.

Do not grieve over the destruction of the mortal body or any creation thereof, or its relatives. O mind, knowing all this, you are still afraid of death! Renounce your attachment to this body and its adjuncts! Make That Eternal One your support. Only That IS... all else is transitory. Worldly attachments and love, friends, relatives and this body too will all perish. Renounce attachment with these.

This is the definition of Truth. How can that be True which is here today, and will not exist tomorrow? A theory that is discovered today, is refuted tomorrow. Decisions taken today are dismissed tomorrow. Decisions change... principles change... only doubt seems to prevail! Then how can any of these be categorized as the Truth? They are all untrue... they only appear as true!

The Truth is only One. The Truth is That which cannot and will not change in any era. O mind! I know now that this body, its thoughts, concepts, opinions... all these are changeable. The wise see the difference. They decided to search... they inspected... and they realized! This mind and body too are unreal. Only That upon Whom all these are dependent... is the Truth... the Eternal Truth.

In order to explain this Truth to me, as it were, *Brahm* and the *Jivatma* are both described as separate.... But actually, both are One. In further *shlokas*, they are both described as One.

Understand just this... Truth is never deficient. Decide to embrace the Truth... separate and give up the false.

अविनाशी तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥१७॥

Having described the difference between the Real and the unreal, Lord Krishna delves further into the eternal nature of the *Atma*:

Understand That alone to be indestructible, which pervades the entire universe; no one can cause the destruction of That immutable Essence.

Shloka 17

That One is the only Truth, the Everlasting and Eternal Consciousness. He is the One from whence this entirety is created, from Whom it is sustained and Within which it exists. Like the dreamer's dream... all that is dreamt in the dream is merely a thought or projection of the dreamer. Similarly, the entire Cosmos springs from His Resolve. The dream and all that is in it is He. Then why should the images of the dream start feeling that they are separate entities... especially when we are not the 'bodies' and have no existence without Him? And all is He. Why do we continually make ourselves happy or sorrowful in this futile manner? He, from Whom all this emerges, know Him to be the Eternal and Indestructible Truth. Nobody can taint or destroy That Unblemished One. Seek His refuge! Beg for His asylum. Only He is your sole support and hope.

How can the destructible grant refuge to the destructible?

The spider creates its own web. But it does not get destroyed at the destruction of the web!

Similarly, know only That One to be Eternal, from Whom this body and this entire world have manifested themselves. That One Who does not get destroyed upon destruction of the Universe, That One is the Truth. That One abides within us as the *Atma*. This body... this carcass can be destroyed. The *Atma* is eternal.

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥३८॥

The Lord spoke again:

O Bharat! All these bodies which are the abode of That indestructible, indescribable *Atma*, are perishable. Hence, fight.

Shloka 18

The Lord has said here that *Jiva* and *Atma* are both the Truth (and therefore eternal). He has equated them for your understanding. He explains as much as your intellect can understand! You and He are true... the rest is the gross body and must pass away. This matter cannot stay in its present form, it must go back to the five gross elements, of which it is constituted. You identify yourself with the gross body... you think you are this body... and you are afraid of death. Do you know that this fear is making you die every moment? The reason for your sorrow should have been that 'I have not been able to know my real Self!' Actually the greatest tragedy is that this 'I' considers itself to be the body. Therefore the natural joys and sorrows of the body self are identified with as 'my' joys and sorrows! This is the cause of my downfall. I have to distance myself from this fallacious thought. I have to rise above it.



Listen O mind! Your mind, tainted by tendencies of rejection and duality, is binding you with this carcass and with this world. You have to rise above these tendencies. And listen! From this moment onwards, you must immediately initiate the greatest 'war' of your life – to know the Truth and the Self. Battle against your tendencies of greed and anger etc... and this battle must persist continually until the last drop of blood remains in your body. Do you not know... this is the only purpose of this body and this life... You must offer this life and every ensuing life for this very purpose into the fire of spiritual practice. Any number of births do not matter in eternity. He is incomprehensible; but to know Him is to merge in Him. Therefore gather all your forces... all your strength and imbue them in a continual war against the impediments in your path.



If one suffers great losses in business or if one enjoys great gains, if one is sorrowful or happy, if one is enjoying the glow of youth or the suffering of old age, there is 'something' within you which is not affected... which has borne witness to you objectively from childhood till today, with complete objectivity and indifference. If you understand this, know...

That 'something' is the real YOU. The *Atma* is unaffected by the body – by its changes and its relations. If you consider that it is YOU who is regressing or progressing, this is your foolishness.

Understand this Truth in another way. Consider this world to be your maternal home. While you were in your maternal home, you enjoyed yourself thoroughly. But all those enjoyments came to an end... they were transient. Now if you are betrothed, go to the home of your Divine spouse... Live the rest of your life at His feet. Like a perfect wife, offer your all to Him. You have travelled across the Ganga on the palanquin of spiritual practice... now why are you afraid? When you remember your maternal home, you feel frustrated sometimes. Do you hear? The Lord Himself is reassuring you, "Do not fear... I am with you! I myself have wed you and brought you thus far. Come! Meet your new relations! These sages, this new noble family of yours... to serve them is your *dharma* now. These are all devotees of Mine. Know them to be born of Me... they are my very Self..."

The Lord shall Himself acquaint you with the ways and expected conduct of His world!

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९॥

Further explaining the mysteries of the *Atma*, *Bhagwan* said:

He who thinks the *Atma* to be capable of killing, and he who thinks that It is killed, does not understand the *Atma*. The *Atma* cannot be killed nor does It kill."

Shloka 19

Lord! What You have said is right... but how shall I bring it into the scope of my experience? How shall I practice it in my day to day life? How can I be free of this body self? O Ram! Until I do not start living it, why am I pretending to understand this truth and explaining it to others? How did I get this right without the appropriate experience? I presumed I 'know' this knowledge, and have started 'disseminating' it to others! I am merely misusing Your knowledge. I cannot understand my destiny.

I say that when the body dies, 'I' do not die... yet if any part of me suffers any pain, I abandon all endurance! I will truly believe that I have faith in what You say, when I can withstand these 'joys and sorrows' of the body and when I transcend the 'feelings' of this mind. I am constantly enmeshed in these bodily travails! If this body itself is false, then Lord, free me from its bondage. First loosen the ties of this world. Let there be a decrease in my acceptance of the judgements and reactions of my senses of perception. I may not be affected by the objects without... but set me free of the body and its liabilities!

O mind! Only then can you decide... what do you want? Change your view point. Till today, identified with the body, you considered all its so called '*dharmas*' to be yours... you were constantly immersed in these. You thought you were the body and the world was the only reality for you. You adjusted yourself to the world while still under this false idea or conception.

Now you have realized that your reality is beyond the mind, intellect and body self. This physical body is a mere projection of the psychic... the bundle of *sanskaras* or latencies that are playing on the screen of the world. The pictures projected on the screen are not real. Similarly, the body is like a shadow of the real Self... yet you believe yourself to be this shadow! But listen! When the switch is turned off, only the film remains... its 'projection' ceases.

Listen! Several latencies of so many *jivas* (through many births) are etched on this film. It is this film that is being projected as this body... and this world which is a conglomeration of carcasses! And you believe yourself to be this body! This body shall inevitably turn to ashes... but the film... the YOU... will stay. There is one unique quality of this film... like the tape of a tape recorder, new grooves are being etched on this old 'tape' daily. As the old film is being projected, it is being rubbed off and the new film... the *sanskaras* or latencies are being imprinted on it. You are partaking of the earlier *sanskaras* and erasing those grooves, but new grooves... the

new 'tape' of *sanskaras* is constantly being prepared. One 'show' is finishing and a new drama is getting readied. One life is concluded, and a new show begins its projection... when that is completed, yet another one is ready!

You are the tape that never changes. You are yourself the non participating 'enjoyer' of every drama. Why do you not remain that enjoyer? The Producer (That One) is there... so why worry? Whatever has been created, accept it. You say you have done this or that... at times you take pride and at other times you lament. Don't you know that all that is transpiring has been filled in the tape much earlier? The songs or tunes that have already been etched will definitely play themselves out. You cannot change them without playing them out. You can endeavour to stop the mind a million times... you may bemoan your destiny and try to change it... you may hurl negative abuses at the Lord... the gains and losses that are inscribed on the tape will necessarily play themselves out. You have no control over it.

However, listen carefully... the next recording is also taking place simultaneously... and the tape is extremely sensitive. You can plan the next picture with care. You can make the next melody harmonious. If you continue to scream about or protest against your present destiny, your future record too will get tainted. The notes of that life too will be unbearable.

If you think that you have made any gains or achievements through your cleverness, through cheating, etc. then you are mad... this is an erroneous conception. "I do, or I can do" is the most foolish thought. Accept what comes and cleanse your mind of all worries. Accept the tape recorded 'music' of life. The highest form of worship of the Divine, is acceptance of destiny. The recitation of the Vedas, or repeating the Divine Name, the performance of *tapas*, or of *yagya* or sacrificial offerings are not worship.

Just endure all He gives with complete acceptance, with head bowed in humility. Accept it consciously and with satiation within. Sorrow, fame, defame, losses or gains are all given by Him. Accept even death gracefully as His '*prasaadam*' (sanctified blessing). This is true worship. This is true attainment of the Truth. Through such acceptance, one attains His Grace. This acceptance is true friendship with the Divine. This acceptance is love for the Divine.

...to be continued

*"Every moment I shape my destiny with a chisel.
I am a carpenter of my own soul."*

~ Rumi



Param Pujya Ma

Arpana

Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,
Karnal, Haryana, India
June 2020

Arpana Events

Sadhana Day

In view of the Covid 19 pandemic, only close Arpana family members gathered at Ma's *Samadhi* in Madhuban to celebrate the commencement of Param Pujya Ma's *Sadhana*, on 9th March.

The thrill of hearing one of Ma's early elucidations in song echoed in our hearts, while their meaning thrummed a deep connection within us.



Ram Naumi, Easter and *Samadhi* Remembrance

Param Pujya Ma believed in the essential Unity and Oneness of all religions. Remembering the Lord on Ram Naumi, Easter and the anniversary of Ma's *Samadhi* wove new threads of knowledge, experience and joy into the tapestry of Ma's Legacy – which is ever expanding, ever clearer and forever with us.



Arpana Hospital

COVID-19 Initiatives of Arpana Hospital

Responding to the District Administration's call for fighting COVID-19:

1. Arpana Hospital converted the entire second floor of the hospital into isolation wards for Covid-19 patients, if the need arises.
2. Separate registration and OPD for patients with flu-like symptoms.
3. Wash basins installed at hospital entrance for all to wash hands thoroughly before entering premises.
4. Sanitizers, gloves and masks were provided to all the departments.
5. Frequent training sessions on COVID-19 infection control practices were conducted for all Hospital Department staff.
6. Doctors and nursing staff are required to use PPE kits.



Until PPE kits arrived, the hospital staff used N-95 masks, disposable coveralls and goggles donated by the Northern Ireland paramedic team. Thank you, Northern Ireland!

Training for Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics

A six-day 'Life Saving Training' was given at Arpana Hospital, from Feb.20-25 by Mr. Frank Armstrong, Divisional Training Officer of Northern Ireland Ambulance Services, supported by Dr. Davinder Kapur, Police Surgeon (Retd.), Northern Ireland.

Basic Trainings for nurses, paramedics and staff included CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) for paediatrics, the newborn and adults.



'Advanced Life Support (ALS),' included CPR with Defibrillation, AED (Automatic External Defibrillator), Multi Para Monitor, and 12-Lead ECG topics as well as ECG (electrocardiogram) tests.

Advanced Training for Doctors: A new protocol in maintaining a patient's airways in emergency situations was demonstrated to Arpana doctors.

Molar Bund

Professional Support from Swami Shivananda Memorial Institute

Assessment of Students, classes 1-6

In February, Arpana teachers had identified 42 students for SSMI evaluation. Some with learning disabilities required special assistance. Others needed counselling and still others needed to repeat their classes.

SSMI Student Assessment Workshop

In a workshop on 7th March 2020, Arpana Balvatika and primary class teachers learned how to use teaching aids for assessment sessions, how to note relevant observations and maintain detailed registers to track the progress of each child.



Workshop on Pre Math Concepts

Different techniques were used to introduce pre-math concepts in a fun filled way. These activities cleared many doubts of the primary teachers.

Teaching Disadvantaged Students in the Time of COVID-19

We are adhering to the Government implemented lockdown rules very strictly and everyone is staying home to be safe.

We have been looking for a plan to continue providing support to our children at this crucial time. Most of our students don't have laptops but most have access to smartphones of their relatives as they live in joint family set ups. These smartphones have basic internet plans, although not enough to run online classes.



Delhi

Vasant Vihar Centre – Enabling Disadvantaged Students

Arpana's program, **Gyan Arambh**, is a tuition program, empowering over 100 students from disadvantaged homes.



After completing the mandatory class syllabi in February, class focus was on the end-of-year examinations.

- ~ Review entire syllabus, with special focus on English, Math & Science.
- ~ Re-teach difficult concepts.
- ~ Social Studies and Hindi, subjects not routinely taught at the Center, were added for review due to students' requests.

'Devotion' – Arpana Handicraft's Outlet in Delhi – on Instagram

Arpana Handicrafts are now showcased in our new Instagram page, ([devotionbyarpana](#)). Contact number: 9871284847. Please follow, like and share – and help us spread the love!



Empowering Rural Women in Haryana

International Women's Day



International Women's Day was a joyous celebration by over 600 women from 82 self-help groups of 16 villages in village Tusang on 3rd March, 2020, marking their own milestones in economic security, knowledge of health and local

governance. Women and children excitedly participated in games and cultural activities alongside SHG women's stalls for food, toys, apparel. A play presented on 'Cleanliness, Health and Plastic-Free India' was greatly appreciated.

Note: A much larger Women's Day Celebration of over 16 villages with 200 self-help groups was cancelled due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Our deep gratitude to the Tides Foundation and the India Development & Relief Fund (IDRF), USA, for grants for rural development programs in Haryana

Haryana Villages – In the Time of COVID-19

Arpana's Self Help Group Women Step Up!

When Lockdown started March 25th, Arpana workers began telephone discussions informing the over 12,000 women members of 100 Haryana self-help groups about COVID-19: symptoms and precautions, social distancing, hand washing, sanitizing villages, wearing masks, etc.

The Self-Help Group Women:

1. Spread this knowledge in their villages
2. Sanitized each of their villages 3 or 4 times jointly with their Panchayats.
3. Saw that the poor families got food rations.
4. Shared phone numbers of local officials to deal with specific problems.
5. Joined in nationwide gratitude to frontline workers by lighting diyas.
6. Encouraged all to download the Aarogya Setu app, which locates any nearby known infected persons and those exposed to coronavirus.



Self Help Group Women Organize Food Distribution for Poor!



Arpana's Self Help Group women noted that 3 factories had closed in Nagla Megha and the migrant labourers without BPL cards were having great difficulty in feeding their families when lockdown occurred. So they collected donations, added money from their group funds and distributed rations to the labourers who had lost their jobs. Six SHGs from village Badagaon contributed Rs. 12,000 to buy rations for those without food in their village. The women continued their ration distribution until the last week in April when the local government ensured that those without BPL cards could also be given support.

Volunteering to be Corona Virus Warriors!

500 of Arpana's self-help group women from 100 villages have volunteered to be the liaison between villagers and Government officials in the fight against Coronavirus if the number of COVID-19 cases rise sharply.

Haryana Government is communicating with the volunteers through a Corona App called Jansahayak/ HelpMe App to help spread knowledge, strengthen the following of safety and social distancing norms, bridge the gap to local officials, for proper ration distribution, etc.

Hearts Which Encompass the Whole World!

Fundraiser for Arpana's Women's Empowerment Programs

Claire (Blickenstaff) Beery is a school friend of some of Arpana's members. She and her husband, Bill, held a fundraiser for Arpana on Feb.22nd which was a great success.

The evening was an immersion in Indian Culture, for which the women guests were dressed in saris or *kurtas* and gifted with bangles, *bindis* and a little brass box with Claire's own curry powder blend.

After enjoying an Indian feast, Claire told them about her own childhood in India and showed a presentation of Arpana's social activities.



***All of us at Arpana
send you heartfelt
thanks for caring!
Your support will
become a part of the
transformation of
these beautiful people
we have the privilege
to serve in Indian
villages!***

*Bill (left) and Claire (right) with the warm and loving
friends who are supporting Arpana's work*

Your compassionate support sustains Arpana's Services

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 132037

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

Arpana Research & Charities Trust, Madhuban, Karnal, Haryana 132037

Send contributions in USA to:

Mr. Vinod Prakash, President, IDRF, 5821 Mossrock Drive, North Bethesda, MD 20852

Mr. Jagjit Singh, AID for Indian Development, 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

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

Information & Resources Office: 91-184-2390905 Executive Director: 91-9818600644

emails: at@arpana.org and arct@arpana.org

Contact person: Mrs. Aruna Dayal, Director Development. Mobile 91-9991687310

Websites: www.arpana.org www.arpanaservices.org

Of Intellect and Devotion

PARAM PUJYA MA ANSWERS SEEKERS' QUESTIONS IN THE ARPANA MANDIR



What is the meaning of wisdom (*vivek*)?

Inherently we all love ourselves. The problem arises with normal people when they are unhappy, and they want to know the reason for this. They cannot bear to have turmoil in their own minds.

There are two ways of reacting towards this turmoil:
Firstly, by seeking peace through external acquisition.
Secondly, by seeking peace through enquiry into the cause of the turmoil.

Most people turn towards external sources, and blame the external world and other people for their emotional discomfiture. They think that people have let them down; that material lacunae are the cause of internal turmoil; and that God or destiny has let them down.

But there is another type of person who objectively and judiciously wants to understand the emotional turmoil, and wants to rectify it once and for all. He knows the mind with its insatiable, ever-increasing demands.

An intelligent man who is wise or discriminating, has, so to say, a row with his own mind, and does not tolerate its misbehavior towards himself. He objectifies his mind and unconsciously sees it as other than himself, saying: “No matter what happened, you had no business to make me unhappy.” This is the beginning of wisdom. The ordinary ignorant man started saying: “I want this or that”, while the wise man was saying, “Why should I be dependent? I want freedom.” The moment he intelligently seeks freedom, he unknowingly and unwittingly becomes a *sadhak* – an aspirant – of the Truth. This is the birth of a seeker of the Truth.

Do we need to worship a personal God?

A true seeker can take recourse in a personal God or a personal enquiry into the Self.

Please remember, a wise man gives up his fight with the world at the outset, though at a conscious level it seems he is fed up with the world and his own dependency on it. He wants his freedom; he wants to have perfect peace which cannot be influenced and shattered by the world around him. For him a constant research begins. He may seek asylum with a personal God or under the Intellect itself. For both, an enquiry into the mind and the Self begins. Both of them have, so to say, declared a war on the mind. Intrinsically, it is only the mind that is the cause of attachment, diversity, unhappiness and the demoniacal attitudes.

Let us first understand the goal you will achieve at the end of your enquiry. The individual ‘I’ will expand and all will become ‘I’. The individual body will, so to say, expand and merge in the Universe. The ‘I’ will lose its personal personality and become Universal; the body will lose a personal master-the-ego and become Universal. Actually, this is an unlimited expansion and not that annihilation of the self of which people are afraid. The ‘I’ can be merged into the Self through a personal God, or through an extremely cautious and vigilant enquiry.

The body will unify and become a part of the Universe when the sense of ‘myself’ has gone. ‘I’ is the egoity which says ‘I am this or that’; ‘mine’ means individualization and claiming the body as yours.

Although both devotion to a personal God, and enquiry into the Self will take you to the same goal, enquiry has numerous pitfalls and can lead you astray by increasing your rejection rate. The aspirant who takes recourse and shelter under a personal God finds his problem of the self and the

world solved without much difficulty or risk because he said at the outset:

1. The world is Yours and Your creation. Thereby he accepts the world as it is. Thus the main insurmountable problem is over in a second.
2. Where his personal body was concerned, he gave it to the Lord, making God the Master of his body and surrendering himself in the service of the Lord. God becomes the common Master of his body and the world.
3. So far 'I', the body, and the world were separate. The body of the 'I' wanted the world as its servant. Now with a common Master, the body and the world became unified. Then your body, as your personal body, loses importance.
4. The mind will be incessantly focused on the personal God.
5. The personal God will automatically become your witness in whatever you do. As such your actions will become more and more righteous every day and in every way. Thus you will automatically be imbibing divine qualities.
6. When you give your body to the personal God, your body becomes his, which will basically make you personalityless. Actually, your personality will develop as the personality of God Himself, without any limitations.

The 'I' will become impersonal towards its own body because it will lose its sense of 'mine'.

One of the major pitfalls in devotion to a personal God is that the devotee wants to serve his personal God and not his God's world. But this impediment is overcome by the intellectual devotee, the *Gyani Bhakt*, as his personal God's qualities start flowing through him.

All the divine qualities must flow towards people, and people are also the test of all these qualities. For the personal God is also everyone else's God. All His children are his and the devotee who does not recognize this misses his goal. Devotion to the personal God will necessarily bring about selfless actions, compassion, generosity, lack of greed etc. in the devotee.

A mere *gyani* without *bhakti* tries to rise above the body by means of reason and enquiry, whereas for a devotee it is all a continuous playway method.

Basically, the *Gyani-bhakt* is a devotional enquirer of the highest order, and he is ever protected from the pitfalls into which the other enquirer can fall. The personal God is an invincible protector which the devotee without

a personal God has not got. The path of devotion to a personal God is a happy and more steady path.

Why read the Scriptures?

The Scriptures teach you the art of spiritual living. They lure you towards the Spiritual and give you the method of bringing the higher values and the Spiritual to your level.

The Scriptures teach you the art of concentration that pierces the formidable values we attach to the material world and our body. They help in transforming our attachment to the gross into devotion – that is, the attachment to the Divine (*bhakti*), which ultimately results in bringing divinity into ourselves. The Scriptures are a measuring rod and the weights essential for a seeker for personal assessment.

In a nutshell, the Scriptures teach us the difference between Self and non-Self (the impositions), and lead us towards the Self through practical life.

Are Scriptures essential?

For Self-Realization, the answer is No. If your life and living is spiritual, the Scriptures are useless for you. If your body, mind and intellect do not mean anything to you, and yet you are living a normal life, the Scriptures are unnecessary for you.

The Scriptures can only tell you what you are not; how can they describe the Indescribable or write about the One who is beyond words?

The Scriptures can give you the method but not the Spirit (*Swaroop*), because only through direct experience can you realize the Self. It is the internal state which is necessary and not mere words. You must do what the Scriptures say; become what they say. Purity of mind is an internal achievement, and is only possible if you develop that attitude in life.

The Law of Forgiveness given in the *Shastras* has no value or meaning unless you forgive all. Words have no meaning without their realization in your practical life, and you can have a practical life that models the Scriptures without reading the Scriptures. In that case, the Scriptures will merely corroborate your state and existence as Being, Consciousness and Bliss. The Scriptures are a dry, lifeless knowledge unless you make them potent with your own being, and become a living embodiment of them. ❖

HTDO



Mathews, a hotshot sales manager, was in the parking lot of a shopping mall. Cars were crawling with anxious drivers looking for that one vacant slot. Mathews, sharp and aggressive, spotted a vacant space ahead and quickly zoomed in. He could see another car trying to reverse into the same slot, but Mathews was determined to beat the other man to it. And he did! Mathews felt jubilant – as we all sometimes do with life's little victories. The old man driving the car was disappointed. He looked Mathews in the eye and continued his search for another parking slot.

Two days later, Mathews was preparing for one of the biggest moments of his career. He was close to winning a big contract for his company. And all that was left now was the formal handshake meeting with the client's CEO. As Mathews walked into the client's office and saw the CEO, he felt a sudden sense of discomfort. Yes, it was the same man from whom he had snatched the parking slot on Sunday. And you can guess what happened thereafter. Alas! If only Mathews had grown up with the HTDO habit!

So what's HTDO?

It has probably happened to you before. As you walk towards the door of an office or a hotel, the person walking in front holds the door open for you. Remember how good it made you feel – if only for that moment. Isn't it surprising that although we all feel good when someone holds the door open for us, we seldom do the same for other? How come?

It's probably because we are all preoccupied with ourselves and obsessed with getting ahead. Here, then, is a life-changing lesson they don't teach you in any B school – **'Hold The Door Open'**.

The world can be divided into two types of people. Those who push open a door, walk through and let it slam behind them. That's the 99% of the population. And there's the 1% who hold it open to allow the next person to walk through. Learn to do that, and you too could join the select 1% club. HTDO doesn't merely make other people feel good. It makes you feel good too. HTDO translates into a behaviour of helping and caring.

Winning in life is less about naked ambition and more about helping other people win. Someone once said, "It's nice to be important. But it's more important to be nice"

Make a beginning. Hold The Door Open.

Attitude in Charity



Charity is a symbol of love, selfless thought, word and deed.

Cash donation or material alms-giving is not enough as charity. It is imperative to coordinate a part of the self to it. Donate your own body, physical strength, capacities, hopes and aspirations – whatever you hold valuable.

The attitude has got to be devotional and that of an offering or a humble presentation to the Master.

Charity is imparted by two different types of individuals:

1. The Introvert – true seeker of the Self within.

- a) He gives material time and energy for personal evolvment.
- b) He gives in the form of charity and austerity, curbing self-enjoyment.
- c) His attitude is that of a humble soul trying to serve his Lord and Master. He is grateful for being provided the opportunity of being of service to someone.

2. The materialistic Extrovert who:

- a) Merely wishes to utilize his spare time for return of a good name.
- b) Takes recourse to social service to be known as the great benefactor of the helpless, bestowing favours on the weaker sections of humanity.
- c) With this attitude he expects gratefulness and humility from the ones served by the Giver and Benefactor.
- d) Expects the world must register and acknowledge the great man he has become in his own eyes!

Spiritually, only motiveless and selfless giving can be extolled.

For the worldly extrovert it is enough of a charity if he discards his torn clothes and superfluous accessories, without consideration for the need of the other and reaps instead a good reputation, without cultivating actual goodness and virtue within himself. He is not enamoured of ‘giving’ as an obligatory injunction of the Supreme Giver, but wants all the credit and fame he can by exploiting the situations for his own benefit. In extreme cases, he will draw out grand schemes and projects and make a big noise and publicity even before he parts with a penny. He will try to compete with others and have a general sense of piety that reassures him of his own goodness.

On the other hand, an introvert and a genuine aspirant gauges the need of the other and gives generously but assiduously so that the other is not humiliated. He does not mind depriving himself while placing the emotional distress of the other above his own need and tries to comfort him at the cost of his own comfort, expense and even reputation.

An aspirant who is seeking the Truth practises ‘daan’ or charity at all three levels of his existence – physical, emotional and intellectual. He gives up rights over his own body and cedes them to others. His personal desire for emotional placation, for renown and security, for praise is no longer in constant search for fulfilment. He gives no credence to his own emotions but gives full cognizance to the others’ need for such emotional satisfaction. At the intellectual level, he formulates no judgements that bias his magnanimity. There is no assertion or imposition of personal opinions or desires on the other. He ventures to give advice only if asked for it.

Nobody knows him or can plumb his depths as he is only quietitude and silence within.

When this state of absolute reactionlessness and acceptance becomes one’s second nature, it gradually leads to the state of mind of a sage. Then ‘giving’ becomes an essential part of his Being, and no more a segregated conscious act.

Making others happy is an act of munificence and embalming beneficence.

ADAPTED FROM PARAM PUJYA MA’S DISCOURSES

Mundane to Spiritual

TAKEN FROM AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MRS. SHEILA KAPUR IN 1994

What is the demand of the worldly, materialistic individual in a nutshell? Some peace of mind and happiness. He seeks God merely to straighten out his petty day to day problems, concerning gross matters. In short, family stability, prosperity and respect from others is his total requirement, and there he stops. Acquiring eternal values is not on the cards.

A seeker, on the other hand, holds a contrary standpoint. He does not brook any wastage of time which he feels he could utilize to his profit. He will not allow negativity to infest (with ever multiplying germs) the pool of the unconscious that is being built up in our daily moment to moment living. He is out to nip this deadly disease in the bud, whilst there is yet time and opportunity for retrieval.

When all desires converge into one single-pointed aspiration of reaching the climax, the foundation stone of *sadhana* is laid. The *sadhak* has to determine his goal. Once that is set, whatever is his conception of Godhood, it will gather increasing faith. That will become the begging bowl that gathers crumbs of devotion from everywhere, each person or circumstance, till final emancipation from oneself is reached. Faith is a mighty power that not only creates the whole wide world around us, but even the Lord comes alive to us, in flesh and blood. It depends on how impeccable our faith and conviction is.

Value system behind the search

We are fully conversant with our implicit belief in the ego and its importance to us. When the same belief is transferred to a Higher Principle, the phantom of the ego changes course and progresses towards Spirituality and the spiritual way of trying to live in the spirit of the Lord. If one is in luck's way, one comes across an Ideal who shows us the way. That, in fact, is a form of perfection being reflected as the seeker's own goal of gross conduct



and subtlety of thought. Seeing this is both a thrill and a marvel – to which he gets affixed and with which he gets infatuated, to the extent that his own body-self-identifications start paling into insignificance. This is the surest short cut to ego negation in self-forgetfulness.

The platforms from which the worldly operate are body-self identification with physical needs, personality intrusions and aggressions, with projects for name and popularity carrying the utmost importance. They are prepared to go to any extent for recreational purposes and for fulfilling their conceptual notions. A genuine seeker, conversely, has no taste for such frivolous frolicking and leaves no stone unturned in transcending the variables of his likes and dislikes, of attractions and repulsions. He considers these as bondages and goes all out to cut at the very roots of all passion and desire. There is no common denominator between these two opposite view points, where the twain can meet. Unhesitatingly and mercilessly, the seeker through self analysis and postmortem, slashes and slanders all his faults, fallacies and errors. He realizes what a pretense he made of doing good to others or fulfilling his duties and obligations, concentrating all his resources and energies only to satiate himself or his own kin. The individual thus becomes more individualized instead of attending to the greatest good of the greatest number. The attitude of serving humanity at large and the universal approach of fraternity towards God's creation, falls to the purview of the real *sadhak* who is out to shake off misconceptions of charity that are so prevalent, with a view to earn a name for oneself.

There is a purpose behind every life and it is pre-determined. Man's total energy is apportioned to him by Higher Powers and is thus unalterable. The only transformation that can take place is on the individualistic front, pertaining to personal vanities and self-importance. If hard work is put in, the sense of doership can wane considerably, thereby putting an end to daily fluctuations of pleasure and pain.

The preset mundane need not change but certainly the hankering must go. **Sadhana comprises of mere conceptual change of outlook and mental attitude.** In a nutshell it is a disconnection from gross matter, a switch over to the unconscious pool of all past impressions and rediscovering the basic unchangeable Self that is Universal. In fact there is nothing to achieve as such, only an idea of foregoing and snapping a link with the old lineage. All the pain in life centers around an expectation for change from the present. Merely through transcending that thought, the congenial and non-congenial become equally acceptable. That lays the foundation for all true happiness.

Intellectual Acceptance

Whether one likes it or not, destiny must follow its course and take its toll. Subsequently situations trail on the pages of Life without preface or warning. Acceptance of the same is enforced by Nature but there is a world of difference between the attitude behind it. When we resist and refuse to face facts as they come, tension mounts up, whereas acceptance on the intellectual level, through practice of surrender to the inevitable, forearms us against disappointment and sorrow. We must know and realize that all attractions and repulsions to transient phenomenon are superfluous and an unnecessary wastage of thought, time and energy. If all that happens, good or bad, is relegated to the Lord's Commandment, 'Thy Will be done', equipoise will follow. The greater the acceptance, the intenser will be the purification process of the internal accumulation of past impressions. A fresh start will be made, as of today.

The actual fallacy lies in the faulty conceptions one holds and their selfish motivations rather than procurement of dross objects. Ploughing back all one's emoluments to universal benefits will actually help one evolve out of lower self instincts. **A genuine seeker declares open warfare against himself, his own tendencies and traits of vanity and conceit, that impede the way of his aspiration to reach higher truths of spirituality.**

It is but natural for the sense organs to operate within the precincts of

***Acceptance
on the intellectual level,
through practice of
surrender to the inevitable,
forearms us against
disappointment and sorrow***

their domain. They should be allowed that right. What is to be shunned is lingering indulgence that procreates longings. Benefits showered on us by the Almighty's benevolence are to be accepted thankfully and with grace. This sense of gratitude includes remaining calm in all eventualities and not crying over what we do not have. This connotes discipline and self

control and teaches us to accept humbly and intellectually all that falls to our lot. Laying personal claims on our assets, which includes pinning hopes on our progeny, in order to ultimately satisfy our own whims and ambitions, is a sin. It entails jealousies which are self-destructive and promote sorrow. Love and consideration on the other hand, are self sacrificing and provide joy, ultimately uplifting us and ours. These are some very simple yet highly effective maxims of *sadhana* or the means to raise oneself on the intellectual level.

Code of Conduct

Family environs dictate the discipline of every home. When such a transference takes place, one is obliged to follow the rules and by-laws of that home. Similarly a seeker is obliged to adhere to fresh attitudes and ways of thought and abide within those limitations. **Self-negation is the trend of a spiritual family, not annulling the rights of the other family members.** Utmost care and skill is needed whilst donning the roles of egoity, others have to be protected from its odorous assaults. Vanities are hurtful and unwelcome to the world in general. We should save others from ourself, the devil who should never be voted for or supported. The 'I ness' is a destroyer that will ultimately envelope us and push us to abyssmal depths of new birth and death cycles. There is just one prophylactic for the *sadhak* – vigilance – over one's own traits and weak spots capable of sabotage and self destruction. Our salvation lies in the constant memory of our original heritage and the effort to push back the imposter ego, that claims domination over a dominion that does not belong to him. God given benefits are doled out to us for a purpose. That purpose has to be fulfilled as a mission of this life span. Each circumstance is a message of the Lord for us.

Towards Divinity

All the latent tendencies conglomerate in the subtle consciousness that manifests in the form of the gross world. Out of this multitude sometimes one singular latency offshoots towards the Eternal. This is the birth or seed of righteousness. Through introspection and looking within, it invokes Divinity and tries to reach its source. Outer creation as the influencing stimuli, the Scriptures and the Saints are relied upon for help and furtherance of the call within. The world is visualized as a platform for a drama being performed on the direction of predestination. Dispassion and detachment step in to play their part. As an objective spectator or Witness, the seeker views the diverse tendencies as extended the world over, as also the compulsive mechanical operations they automatically perform. Whenever and wherever one notices them, one has to pay implicit obeisance to the One and only Overlord. Each thought flowing thus denotes flowers of a garland strung together for holy worship. This process negates self-love, conceit and all momentary hankerings.

Once the inner urge erupts, it gathers around it all supportive thoughts, praying and eulogizing at the altar of the Lord. It takes the form of all divine virtues participating in a sacrificial *Yagya*. Gradually the whole mental arena imbibes the colouring of *Ram Rajya*, the domain of selfless existence and living. The importance of the dross wanes, giving priority to the spiritual and universal interest of wellbeing of all. *Sadhana* is a progressive ascension towards the Ultimate. Freshly emerging thoughts continuously weave a garland to place at the altar of the Supreme Being and thus the individualized entity is lost in the source, the seed. Tendencies, varied hues all merge into a singular longing and love for the Eternal. **This mergence into the Universal quietens the mind into mindlessness and emotionless emotion.**



*"And still, after all this time,
the Sun has never said to the Earth,
'You owe me.'
Look what happens with love like that.
It lights up the sky."*

~ Rumi

Those Given a Helping Hand ~ now Extend a Helping Hand!



Arpana's program for 12,000 poverty stricken women in Haryana is proving that support in their time of need can turn the poorest of the poor into mature, compassionate and responsible citizens who are eager to pull their weight in any emergency to save their neighbours, their village, their nation and the world!

Over the past 20 years, thousands of desperately poor women have banded together under Arpana's development program into 865 self help groups (SHGs). There they learned to save (even if only Rs. 10/month), opened their own bank accounts, took micro-credit loans through their groups for family exigencies (including buying husbands out of bonded labour) and business loans to set up their own small enterprises.

Through meetings twice a month, they learned about basic health principles, nutrition, business practices, local governance, gender equity and social justice. They learned that each person has her own story – and that they

can get through any problem by helping each other. They learned about trust as each woman in a group of about 10-15 women is responsible for the loan taken by each member. Even better, they learned honesty, integrity and compassion.

As they gained financial security and self-confidence, many volunteered to be trained for leadership roles in Arpana's programs. Self-help groups banded together in Federations of about 400 SHGs each, giving the women a voice in District and even State governance, as well as enabling women to utilize the many government programs set up for their social, health and economic wellbeing.

1500 women were trained as members of Shadow Committees in the Panchayats for Civil Amenities (housing, water, electricity, etc.), Livelihood and Social Justice and many have been diligently carrying out their duties, thus improving lives in their own villages.

Response to COVID-19

Thus, when the COVID-19 pandemic caused the whole world to grind to a halt, the 100 villages of Arpana's programs were not left in the dark. Arpana's Rural Development Department started an Awareness Campaign on the current coronavirus which, in keeping with the new rules of social distancing, is being conducted entirely by phone.

Each team member of Arpana's Rural Department was allotted 10 villages. Each made an average of 50 calls per day to Women Leaders of the Self Help Groups and Shadow Committees to apprise them of the symptoms of the disease as well as the importance of taking precautionary measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, sanitizing their villages and frequent washing of hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.

Shadow Committee Women made a lot of effort in helping the poorest of poor get access to rations being distributed by the Government. Some group women identified very poor families in their villages without livelihood or food and have been distributing rations to them by collecting vegetables from villagers as well as buying some from their own group fund money.

SHG Women and Panchayats made a joint effort to properly sanitize all the villages around 3 to 4 times. ***Arpana workers and SHG Leaders are in constant touch with the Panchayats on issues and developments concerning the virus.***