



I Long to Come to Meet Thee Lord

*I long to come to meet Thee Lord, how shall I adorn my being?
I yearn to get a glimpse of my God, on what device could I lean?*

*Should I go to Kashi my Lord, or to Mathura to look for Thee?
Or should I traverse the paths of Brindavan, in the hope – some day I'll find Thee?*

*I long for the dust that touched Your feet, 'tis blessed 'tis hallowed by You;
On my forehead I shall rub each speck of this earth, at least a speck must speak of You.*

*A burning log purity attains, I burn as impure as before;
Let me, like the ashes, fall at Thy feet, this separation I cannot endure.*

तोरे मिलन को आना

तोरे मिलन को आना है, अब कौन शृंगार करूँ।
पिया दरस को पाना है, अब कौन उपाय करूँ॥

तू कहे तो काशी जाऊँ, मथुरा जाये रहूँ।
जग त्यजी वृन्दावन जाऊँ, गलियन् में मैं फिरूँ॥

जो धूलि तोरे चरणा लागी, उसे कहाँ पाऊँ।
सब माटी माथे पे लेपूँ, कभी तो कण पाऊँ॥

लकड़ी जले तो लाली पावे, मैं कारी जलूँ।
वह राख भई अर्पित होए, मैं जल जल जलती रहूँ॥

Waves

When tough times come your way, you really have only two options. You can either fight the waves or you can ride them.

You can spend all your energy wishing things were different and wishing that people and situations would change. You can spend your precious time fighting against reality and all that is – or you can let go and ride the waves.

You can soften. You can accept that life brings waves, and some waves will be undoubtedly wonderful but others will be incredibly tough.

We hope you learn to ride your waves.

~From 'Walk the Earth'



Contents

3	Your Grace fills my Life... Abha Bhandari	31	Awaken... awaken... awaken Abha Bhandari
16	What is the Mind? Adapted by Dr. Ela Anand	34	'Painful' Experiences Purnima
20	Srimad Bhagavad Gita – Ma's Love Letters to Her Lord	35	Arpana Newsletter
		39	A Debt of Deep Gratitude



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*Your Grace
fills
my Life
to
Overflowing*

Part 3

ABHA BHANDARI

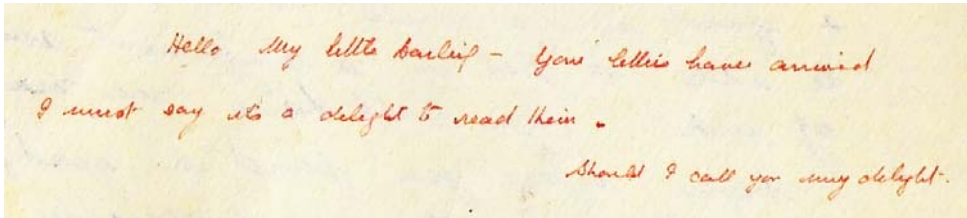


Delhi – A new chapter begins

I returned from Dharwad on the 12th January 1965. Ever since we had returned to Delhi from Poona in January of 1964, we had been staying at Cottage no. 13, Delhi Gymkhana Club. The accommodation comprised of a medium sized living room with a small kitchenette on one side, and a bedroom with a dressing room and a small enclosed verandah. It was small, but adequate for our needs. Our meals were had at the Club dining room.

I would cycle to my school... The Convent of Jesus and Mary, every morning... a ride of a good 30 minutes one way. Watching all my friends being brought to school by their parents in their cars, I often grumbled before my parents..."Why can you not have me dropped to school?" But they stood their ground... and today I realize the value of their tenacity and the reason for their decision to make their daughter tough for times to come!

When I returned from school, my daily routine would be to first write the letter to Ma, which I had promised her before I left Dharwad. I leave it to your imagination to figure out what a young girl of 13 could write on a daily basis to someone who was 28 years older than her... that too, with full belief that the letter would be read and answered! And my buoyancy was not ill found! I would look forward to answers to the immature queries I would place before Ma... which she would reply to with complete seriousness through a line written by herself in letters by Chhote Ma, or Biji or any



other member of the small family at Dharwad! When I look back today, I realize that through this letter writing, Ma was building confidence within me, for tasks the Lord had destined for me in the future! She was also cementing a relationship which she already had prophesized would last for a lifetime!

But for me at that time, my relationship with Ma was the fulcrum of my life. I longed to be with her again and experience that loving identification and physical proximity... little did I know that my prayers were going to be answered very soon! In June, that year, Dr. JK Mehta... lovingly addressed as 'Papaji' wrote to Dad that Ma had been running a low grade fever for some weeks. Several blood tests and other affiliated examinations had been done, but without result. He asked Dad's opinion as to what should be done! Having given due thought to the problem, Dad suggested that Ma came to Delhi. He could then admit her to Irvin Hospital and the tests could be conducted there again.

My happiness knew no bounds! Although I was concerned that Ma was not well... but a little girl's excitement could not be restrained! When Ma flew down to Delhi with Papaji, I busied myself joyfully to make all the necessary arrangements for Ma to stay in our little 'cottage'. My parents had their beddings shifted to the living room so that Ma could be given the utmost comfort... and I anxiously awaited Ma's arrival.

When Ma arrived from the airport, it seemed as though life had returned

again. She stepped foot in the cottage, and it seemed as though her very entrance made it the most special place to be in! She noticed that my parents had displaced themselves from their bedroom, and immediately reversed that! She got her bed shifted to the little dressing room much to the dismay of my parents. Thy remonstrated and requested Ma to accept the place they had prepared for her... but I was the happiest of all, because I found myself a little space at the foot of her makeshift camp cot, to place my bedding there for the night! Although Ma had come to Delhi for her medical examination, she showed no trace of the discomfort she was in. The twinkle in her eyes, the mischievous smile on her lips... everything was exactly the same as I remembered.



This was not unexpected. During the time I was with Ma at Dharwad, I had noticed that her ill health did not affect her interactions at all. There, I had seen her faint ever so often even walking the short distance between the two cottages... The very next moment, when consciousness returned, she would continue to Bibiji's bedside and spend even an hour or more in answering her queries or offering prayer on her behalf! Even then, I used to be amazed that her physical condition in no way affected the clarity of her mind! Here... I was witness to the same quality again!

The very next day, Ma was admitted to the hospital to verify the cause of her incessant fever. Ma remained at the hospital for almost 15 days. Tuberculosis was diagnosed, and her treatment began. While she was at the hospital, not for a day was she without people around her... consulting her regarding their emotional problems... questioning her regarding their spiritual progress... etc. In that duration, it was decided that Ma would not return to Dharwad and that she would henceforth stay at Madhuban.

Those early days at Madhuban

Arpana Trust which had been constituted in 1962, when Ma was at Rishikesh, was now to be given gross dimensions in the form of a generous



donation of land by the family of my paternal aunt and her daughter and grandchildren. Two rooms had already been erected there, and the construction was ongoing...

To be in close proximity with Ma was an unbelievable gift bestowed upon me by the Lord. The 111 kilometre journey to Madhuban became almost a bi-weekly delight! Ma's 'family' from Dharwad now arrived at Madhuban, which meant that my friends, who were more like sisters to me... Anu and Minni (now renamed Priya) also came to Madhuban... to rebond with them was a joy I looked forward to. The journey to Madhuban in those days was like a voyage through green fields... sugarcane... and wheat and rice flanked the highway which was not broader than a two way road at that time! I used to look forward to every alternate Saturday, when we used to hop into the car and Dad drove my mother and me to Ma's 'heavenly abode'... Madhuban. When school holidays were imminent, I would declare to my parents, "I will spend all my holidays with Ma! You can drop me to Madhuban and return!"

What nostalgic memories invade the heart. Ma was the bestest friend ever... the most loving mother... and the most innovative 'teacher'! Her lessons were all delivered in a 'playway' manner... In fact, there were no lessons delivered at all! We learned 'on the job'... inspired by the thought that Ma would be witness to what we did... therefore, we must do it well!

In those days, the front courtyard in front of the few rooms of the *ashram* was the 'sitting room' and the 'dining room' of all the members. On warm summer evenings, water would be sprayed in the courtyard with a pipe and *charpais* and chairs would be placed there with one or two pedestal fans for the elders. The evenings were dedicated to questions and answers with Ma... followed by dinner at 7.

Those were magical days... the sweet fragrance of the wet earth wafted through the breeze cooled by the freshly sprayed ground... and under the shade of the solitary 'jungle jaleb', I would soak in Ma's presence. I cannot honestly say that I understood the full connotation of the questions being asked or the answers that followed. I was simply content to the brim just



to immerse myself in Ma's company. There was very little in terms of physical comfort... but the security and charisma of Ma's persona did not even allow thoughts of any lacunae to appear. Her glance upon me... that quick smile directed towards me... a mischievous wink every now and then... could there be a greater luxury than this?

Hitherto, I was accustomed to being served all the meals at a formal dining table. Now, with the new unsaid rules engrained in us by Ma, it became highly unsuitable that we, the children remained seated whilst our seniors served the meal! In fact, we were slowly to be introduced to the 'fun' of cooking! We were given the task of making '*phulkas*'... completely untrained... but filled with the will to please our Ma, we accepted the challenge. Whilst I kneaded the flour, Anu would flatten it with a rolling pin,

and Priya would provide it with the perfect shape by pressing down on it with the sharp cover of the 'kettle'... all this in a secret pact between us to gain the consequential praise by our elders for perfectly shaped *rotis*! However, could anything escape Ma's inner eye? She knew what we were up to... and slipped into the makeshift 'kitchen' whilst we were conjuring up these perfect *rotis*, and burst into laughter at our innovative method! At times like this, doubling with shared laughter, we felt she was indeed one of us... to laugh together... talk together... sing together... and a lot more!

In those days, we could not afford helpers in the kitchen... therefore more often than not, we would be not only the cook's helpers, but also the 'servers' and the 'washers'. As the *satsang* was going on, we would vie for the privilege of serving Ma and getting her loving attention in return. Often, after dinner, it would be 'song time'... It was indeed my time to unrestrainedly proclaim my 'undying love' for Ma publically! She in turn, reciprocated fully... her song often punctuated with twinkling, dancing eyes, saying a lot more than the song itself! *'Maang ke saath tumhara mein ne maang liya sansaar'*... or *'phoolon ke rang se, dil ki kalam se, tumko likhi roz paati!'* These gems from Hindi cinema took on a new meaning altogether when directed towards Ma, and to be the recipient of her loving attention thereafter! It was much akin to a maiden singing a devotional hymn to the Lord in a temple... and then watching Him step down to lift up His devotee with affection and dance with her to her tune...!

As mentioned earlier, Ma's lessons of life were more often laced with love and laughter. The resources being very limited, we were all encouraged to 'give of ourselves' in every way possible. Come April and the wheat grown in our fields through seeds donated by a well-wisher, now was ready for harvesting. Every family member took on this task with great enthusiasm... whereas the senior members engaged in this task only in the early hours



every morning, we children, including some of our 'friends' from the nearby 'Quarters' who had recently become our playing companions, harvested the wheat with great aplomb... blisters on our hands and feet did not interfere with the joy of our 'lunch' ... *paranthi* with *achaar*... or rolled with a single

vegetable, along with a cooling tumbler of *lassi*... being provided to us at 12 noon... sent lovingly by our Beloved Mother, and as a bonus, on some of the days Ma herself would bring us the lunch! She would sit with us and regale us with jokes and interesting stories... and her love would refill us with immense vigour to continue with our task.



Cutting the crop standing in almost 8-10 acres meant a week or two of hard work... and then helping to load the bullock cart with the freshly harvested crop... and returning in the evenings... faces black with the strong sun but hearts bright with enthusiasm... skin that burnt with grazings from the sharp ears of ripened wheat which singed when bathwater touched it... but the mind joyous! All these indelible memories evoke immense gratitude within the heart because they strengthened values of love, identification, togetherness... a laughter that emanated from the heart yielded a bonding that came also from sharing tough times together...

Memories of being ‘helpers’ of the mason when the Ashram rooms were being constructed also dwell strong within the heart. Even the toughest physical travail became fun when Ma added her love and laughter to it. A mason had to be employed for the ongoing construction activity... but where was the money for the helpers? We all volunteered and discovered the immense fun and gratification in working together... carrying bricks to the mason became a game for us, as we vied with each other to see how many each one could carry at a time... and how innovative was our effort! The activity of preparing the ‘gara’ or alternative adhesive agent for the bricks was another cause for delight... since, as we mixed the water with the earth by stamping in it for hours at a stretch, we told each other jokes and stories... and often fell into the ‘quagmire’ laughing uncontrollably! Through it all, my eyes would always be searching for Ma... every now and then she would come out and praise our endeavours and lovingly thank us all... those were the moments I would live for!



It was not as though our lives during those first few years comprised only of physical ‘labour’... Ma would more than adequately ‘compensate’ us in so many ways! How joyous were those moments when, after a full day’s ‘work’, we would all bathe and gather in Ma’s room... Ma would declare to all the elders that this was time reserved only for her children! We would feel ecstatic! Ma had a radio in her room, which she would switch on... and enact all the songs that were played there... Ma could be a better ‘Dev Anand’, a more flamboyant ‘Shammi Kapoor’, a greater romantic than ‘Raj Kapoor’... she basically outshone every actor, and it seemed to us as though she was singing that very song for each one of us! Her eyes danced along with every changing expression. Was this indeed the essence of the ‘Ras lila’ of Lord Krishna... where every Gopi felt that she was the special beloved of her Lord? In the winter months, out came the ‘family *razai*’... a double quilt, which would afford place to our legs... even 10 of us could fit under this *razai* filled with the warmth of love and laughter and security! A bag of peanuts would be circulated by Ma, and amidst hilarious recounting of the day’s happenings, we would forget all else in Ma’s instructive presence. For, very often, she would use these moments to guide our thoughts and reactions... giving them the correct focus... removing the weeds of negative propensities such as complaints, jealousies and self-assertion, and planting instead, the seeds of love, understanding and forgiveness.

In those days, the only vehicle we had at the Ashram was Ma’s Ambassador car. Ever so often, Ma would exclaim...“It has been so long since we went to the movies... let us go today!” We would all pile into the car, and off we



would go to a movie hall in Karnal or in Panipat, depending on the movie we all voted to see! A 'box' would be booked, and the entire family would be seated together... *papadam* and bottles of cold drinks would be ordered and amidst the crackle of the *papadam* and the sheer joy of being together with Ma we would all be rejuvenated! Invariably, Ma or Chhote Ma would later sit with us and discuss and dissect the characters of the movie,

thus, unknown even to us, a process of character building was happening even amidst the most joyous events!

A 'club' was created for us, where all the children from nearby families would assemble every evening and play games under the watchful eye of one of the seniors... a veritable '*vaanar sena*' in the making!

I marvel at how that one human being whom we called 'Ma' could belong to all... and was so loved by all! She brought out the best in each one, and gave each one an unmatched sense of security in belonging to her! Every moment with her was a moment of utmost joy... and yet, a moment of soul building for each one of us. Her 'spirituality' was a spontaneous translation of the Scriptures into life... her identification was immediate and her acceptance of all was a natural flow from within her. We loved her not only for what she was with us, but for what she was in essence. Never did she allow us to be in awe of her. How could one be in awe of one's best friend... one's beloved... one's very own? And it was in those years that she



recognized the talents in each one, and strengthened and augmented those talents.

There used to be a little 'lounge' outside the *mandir* in those days. This lounge used to double as the 'crafts' room and the 'recreation' room. The entire family would gather there after their daily chores and reinforce their talents during those early days. We would paint greeting cards, fabrics and canvas... or knit to our hearts content... but again, this nurturing of talents had another hidden 'lesson' for us... to think deeper into the fact of life that we need to nurture gratitude in our hearts towards those who do so much for us. Therefore we were encouraged to 'earn' through our talents to help others. Hand painted greeting cards, baby quilts, cushion covers... industriously we went about our work inspired by Ma's appearance every now and then to 'chat' over a cup of tea or biscuits! I remember blankets being bought for our field workers... and new clothes for our kitchen staff through the money thus 'earned'... of course the buyers were our own doting parents and their friends, who encouraged our endeavours with their wholehearted support. Some part of the earnings were also 'donated' by us to the Trust fund... since the Trust was looking after us all! Ma would reinforce within us the habit to 'contribute' towards it rather than 'take' from it.

Just as Ma's heart knew no boundaries... so also, the Trust had no boundary walls! Yet, I cannot recall any theft during those early years of the '60s! The steadily growing Trust house merged into the orange orchard, and then into the fields... a vast expanse of lush green, unmarred by concrete structures! Adjacent to the front courtyard was a tubewell, with a tank shielded by jute cloth. This tank served as our bathing area, since there were no washrooms built yet apart from one for Ma and one for the seniors! For all of us children, who were earlier used to urban facilities, this too became a game to look forward to! In the middle of winter, the tubewell spewed out 'warm' water, with smoke rising from the tank due to the extreme cold of Haryana's winter... yet, when one stepped into it, it would be ice cold! This 'country life' was not only endearing but also a great tutor, strengthening our physique, our resolve and our inner beings for tough times ahead if required.

Yet, the real 'tutor' was Beloved Ma. Daily *satsangs* in the *mandir* at 6 am and 6 pm were certainly an opportunity to hear her answers to seeker's questions... but the real tutorial was to see her in action! Another person's need was the SOLE guarantor for spontaneous action by Ma! She thought



nothing of giving anything she had if the other had need of it. A new fiat car had just been purchased in exchange for the ambassador car which had started to give trouble. Dr. Sher Singh, a renowned gynaecologist of Karnal had just begun to visit Arpana. Her relationship with Ma was silent but strong. One day when she was visiting, her car developed some mechanical problem and she was concerned about how she would return home. Without a second thought, Ma offered that she could take her car home. It did not matter that Dr. Sher Singh had just recently learnt how to drive! As destiny would have it, whilst she was returning home, she had a bad accident. The car was a complete write off! With great anxiety, she rang Ma up to inform her of what had happened! Ma's reaction was amazing! She said to Dr. Sher Singh, "Shubh behen... this is such wonderful news! Come over immediately and let us celebrate together... the Lord has kept you safe... what more can we ask for!" I was witness to the joy on Ma's face... and the very next morning, there was a celebratory lunch for Shubh Aunty, as we all called her! There was no talk whatsoever of the loss of the brand new car... 'things' had no place in Ma's life... as compared with relationships! This incident left a deep impression on me.

Ma was a mirror to each one who came to her. Yet, she never failed to take anyone who approached her ahead on their spiritual journey, whether they realized it at that time or not!

There was a very rich and influential business man who used to come to her for spiritual instruction. So impressed was he with Ma's spiritual persona, that he once said to her, "I henceforth undertake complete responsibility for this Ashram, and for the dissemination of this Divine knowledge that flows forth from you... I seek only one favour in return... please grant me the permission to build one room next to yours!" Ma laughed and said "If this is what you seek in return, I want to have no part of the 'riches' you are offering me! Go and think it over again." Humility was the lesson she was teaching this 'aspirant' who had approached her thus... and she knew full well the consequences of her response. The businessman never returned... his ego was too deeply hurt! Ma's words however had left an indelible mark on him, which he surely would have remembered time and again in the future... an irksome 'grain of sand' in the eye which had the potency of taking him forward spiritually.

Yet another 'businessman'... a Chartered Accountant and Finance head of his Company, took pride in his 'accounting acumen' and during a conversation with Ma, he expanded on his implicit honesty in accounting! "But your accounts are completely inaccurate!" said Ma. He was taken aback. "How can you say this?" he asked, dismayed at Ma's remark. "Your emotional accounts are completely corrupt!" was Ma's answer.

My mother, a perfectionist in every way, also prided herself in her faultless 'account keeping' and derived great satisfaction in the fact that she did not



‘owe’ a penny to anyone! Ma of course was there to rid us of our misconceptions! She one day apprised my mother that if what she said was indeed true, then she should also consider...had she ‘paid back’ that farmer who toiled to bring food to her table? Had she truly been ‘just’ to each and every person in that chain of innumerable workers who had been labouring every day of her life, to bring her every facility that she had today? Did she think that money was adequate to repay anyone for their contribution to her wellbeing? How faulty and wrongly placed was this pride!

Truly, life with Ma was a veritable blessing. Each moment, we were recipients of her immense love and grace... but each moment was also a moment of learning for each of us. When I first met Ma, my sister Reva was in the United States on the American Field Service scholarship, and had therefore not had the good fortune of meeting Ma. However, in 1966 she returned to Delhi and proceeded to complete her graduation. Her interesting ‘first meeting’ with Ma is described by her in the ‘Golden Issue’ of the Arpana Pushpanjali. Thereafter, she too experienced Ma’s love first hand, and ‘fell in love’ much as I had! I have to admit that I was somewhat envious of her, since, having completed her graduation, she sought and received permission from Ma to stay with her at Madhuban! When I ventured to tell Ma that I too should receive that permission, since I had met her first... she lovingly smiled at me and said “You already stay in my heart little one!” ... and then she reminded me, “First finish your graduation... and then come to me!”

...to be continued



What is the Mind ?

*Adapted by Dr. Ela Anand from Param Pujya Ma's
prayer no. 713 of the Prayer Shastra*



As long as the mind remains, union with the Lord is not possible.

I know now, O Lord, that the mind is the obstacle which comes in my way. This mind has attachments and also the lust for possessing objects. The ego and 'I' flows through the mind steeped in *agyan* or ignorance. The mind goes through joy and sorrow. It is the mind which gets attached to the body. As a result of this attachment, animosities and jealousies also arise.

The Unstable Mind

How can one rectify the mind? It is the mind that corrects itself... It is the mind which becomes a worshipper of the Lord, it is the mind which becomes a beggar. If the mind so desires, then it can attain the Supreme Essence. It is the mind which becomes a follower of either the spiritual or superior path or the pleasant or inferior path. This is all a game of the mind. The mind is unstable and makes contact with different objects of the

world. When thoughts arise in the mind, instability arises. Instability is an indication of the presence of the mind. When the instability disappears, the mind is no longer present. Instability is the *dharma* of the mind, which encourages action. The strength of the mental action indicates instability. The mind is a collection of traits. Every trait displays this instability. A current of desires flows in the mind and each desire displays this instability. Only when the mind becomes stable, and it becomes silent forever, can it attain or merge in the Lord.

The mind gives birth to sorrow and is the cause of the cycle of birth and death. It is the mind which is the ‘enjoyer’. Negative tendencies are a part of the mind, arising from the ego. The attachments to the objects in the world and the ‘I and mine’ attitude are all a part of the mind. A person’s basic reality is dependent on the mind which cannot be surrendered so long as any thoughts remain. The silence of the mind is freedom. It is in this freedom that union with the Lord occurs.

Please instruct the mind to become silent, O Lord!

Crossing the *Bhavsagar*... the vast Ocean of the mind

It is the mind which is continually creating the world. The ocean of thoughts or *Bhavsagar* that abides in the mind is nurtured by the sea of desires. Desire is a basic quality of the mind. A *sadhak* can transcend these desires through abidance in the Lord’s Name. If the mind, drowned thus in the ocean of thoughts, pleads with the Lord to help him, then the oars which save him are also the oars of the mind. To cross the ocean of the mind seething with desires, the *sadhak* must sit in the boat of the devotional mind. Then the mind itself becomes the oars that steer the *sadhak* ‘homewards’. These oars are made of the Lord’s Name. The *sadhak* stabilizes the mind by resorting to ideologies and ideals. Slowly the ocean of thoughts and desires can thus be transcended. It is the mind itself which carries



itself across this ocean. If desires and attachments are strong then the mind causes the *sadhak vritti*... or the propensity to free oneself from one's mental shackles, to drown. When a storm or typhoon arises, the boat capsizes. But if the boat is made of the Lord's Name, then it will right itself once again.

Cajoling the Mind

O mind, remember that I am telling you about yourself. Seeing your traits I am trying to explain them to you yourself! When the propensity of the mind to become attached becomes a habit, it becomes happy or sad because of these habits. When this very habit transforms itself into a *sadhak vritti*, then it sings praises of the Lord. At that moment the mind longs to erase itself, but is unable to do so because of lifelong habits. Its peace is therefore continually obstructed.

O mind, you have the strength to reduce the flow of your habitual traits and even to stop their flow. That ability has not manifested itself as yet and that is why you have not been able to make a difference within yourself. Your enquiry has not become strong enough and so the ocean of thoughts has not 'dried up'. The stronger the intensity of your yearning, the more likely that the Lord's Name will fall like rain upon you. When the flow of thoughts revolving around the 'I' stop, then the discussions revolving around the Lord's Name will begin. When all one's thoughts become seekers and collectively take the Lord's Name, then His Name will be established within the heart. Then there will be no need to struggle to cross the ocean of thoughts. The Lord Himself will then come and take you 'home'.

If all desires are removed, the mind will be silenced. If there is even one lingering desire remaining, the Lord does not manifest Himself. When attachment and involvement completely subside, then the mind becomes silenced. When silence has prevailed, the ego is silent. This freedom from desires and attachments is true eternal freedom. The way to union with the Supreme is through silence. When one's seeking is intense and possesses perseverance and continuity, one attains freedom from attachments and desire. This is all a 'game' of the mind. All the traits then unite to go towards That One.

One should try and understand this once more. It is the mind which is the *sadhak* and it is the mind itself which creates the *bhavsagar* or the ocean of thoughts. It is the mind which gives pain and also experiences pain. It is the mind through which all knowledge flows. It is the mind which

is the boat, the boatman and also the tiller. It is the mind which also takes the form of the *sadhak* or the 'charioteer'. The senses are the horses of the chariot, the mind takes control. You yourself are the senses, the propensities and the mind. You yourself become attached to external objects. You yourself desire the transient happiness derived from this contact... Thus you forget your goal and become the obstacle in your own way.



When the *sadhak vritti* or propensity arises, the birth of an abiding desire for the Supreme Lord occurs. The senses no longer remain predominant. When one takes the Lord's Name, one bows one's head in humility, with folded hands, singing the Lord's praises and fixing one's eyes on the Lord's feet. Then every moment is His; One's feet then walk towards His temple. Let us rejoice and go to meet the Lord!

Once the desire for the Truth arises, then desire, attachment and involvement are renounced forever... no longer do we lose ourselves in external objects. If all other desires and external inclinations are silenced, we will surely get contentment. The Self is Silence. In silence, one attains one's true 'home'.

Remember, O mind, that silence leads to union with the Supreme. When there is no trace of joy or sorrow and the mind is not shaken, then there is no instability. Just as when there is no wind, the flame rises straight up, similarly one-pointed inclinations and endeavour make the desire for the Supreme rise straight 'upwards' to reach its zenith. Such a man, unbiased and indifferent to himself, becomes fearless. Transcending all thoughts, he merges with the Lord.

The Lord's Name has the power to take the mind towards this Silence. O Lord, have mercy on me. Let just one desire remain.. so that all other desires of the mind are erased by the Lord's Grace. When only the Lord remains, then Eternal Silence, Eternal Peace, Eternal Bliss remain. Then one abides in the Self. ❖

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



As we continue to peruse Param Pujya Ma's 'Love letters to her Lord,' it would be worthwhile to note the importance of the one pointed focus of the sadhak...

Ma's thought process reveals to us a true sadhak's inner journey... She steers us clear of our fears and inhibitions and enthruses us to walk onwards to our true 'home'. With great love, she discusses the pros and cons of our propensity towards 'inaction' and reveals the Divine vistas that we could attain to if we only took the first few 'baby steps' towards our spiritual abode.

ABHA BHANDARI

In Continuation...

Chapter 2

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥३४॥

Now Lord Krishna persuades Arjuna, the scion of the highly respected Pandava family, saying, “If you do not fight, you will incur sin.”

People will always speak ill of you; for an honourable person, dishonour is worse than death.

Shloka 34

Remember, Arjuna was also human as we are... with all our faults and weaknesses. He too had not risen from the dualities of fame and defame etc. Arjuna like us, was identified with the body self. He believed himself to be the body and identified with the dualities of the body-self and with the gross gratifications that lay before him. Arjuna had not transcended the idea of dishonour and fame.

This rationale is not relevant to elevated souls such as Raman Maharishi, who was and is one with HIM.

Aberrations arise... and when I try to stop them, they erupt even more. I become anxious. Thus a new *sanskara* or latency is created. Separate yourself from the body. In this war, the fear of dishonour is the biggest enemy. This world is unreal. All thoughts, cogitations etc. are unreal. O foolish one! One who has cognized this Truth, is not afflicted by any mental aberrations.



Only that one has been asked to ‘fight’ whose desires, attachment and cravings still remain. If you still labour under their burden, then you must strive to do only that by which aberrations do not occur. Fight... but with indifference... this equanimity is your essential nature. The *dharma* of a *sadhak* is to fight aberrations and negative thoughts and thought processes. If you do not fight, you will labour under heavier burdens. So do all in accordance with your nature.

The Lord says to Arjuna, ‘Do not doubt!’

How does it matter as to what is the Truth and what is not the Truth? You keep trying to change the other’s faith and opinion... this is foolishness. Belief and faith are potent tools. They have the power to instil life even in a rock. You cannot even understand the faith someone has, say, in the Ganga, in a Godly image, in the Peepal tree or the Tulsi plant!

Sometimes, a weak person can derive strength simply through proximity with someone powerful! So also, if I associate my feeble thoughts with the powerful thought processes of the *Rishis* of yore, maybe I shall be able to attain their grace. Under the influence of their association, I may gain strength and trace my path towards the Supreme. I too may be able to gain their understanding. If I merge with their thoughts and their perceptions, I may even be able to know them.

Faith and devotion are essential in the process of *sadhana*. Do not be caught in confusion and doubt. Accept That One. It is doubt that leads to destruction. You will cry when you labour under the attack of defame. You are a *Kshatriya*. It is your nature to fight. Rise and fight! Or else remorse will consume you. However, if you are detached within and have attained *vairagya*, it is another matter.

भयाद् रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥३५॥

Further elaborating on the subject of dishonour the Lord says, “Arjuna! Whatever humiliation you have to suffer, will in any case come your way.

The great charioteers will consider that you fled the battlefield through fear; those who hitherto held you in great esteem will in future regard you with contempt.”

Shloka 35



O Arjuna! Those who hold you in great regard today, will look upon you with indifference and disregard tomorrow. Your mind will be stricken by remorse. You will regret this ‘relinquishment’ of duty, because this ‘relinquishment’ does not stem from your heart. You are merely subjecting yourself to the onslaught of *moha*. People will talk negatively, and you will be agonized. If you are to suffer this confusion within, then it is better to engage in this war. Even if you die fighting this war, at least you will have an honourable death! You will not be creating more latencies.

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥३६॥

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥३७॥

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३८॥

The Lord continues:

Your enemies will deride your prowess in derogatory terms and say many things which should not be said; indeed, what could be more distressing than this?

If killed in battle, you will attain heaven; if victorious, you will enjoy this earthly kingdom. Therefore resolve to fight and arise!

Pleasure and pain, gain or loss, victory or defeat; consider these with equanimity and fight – and you will not incur sin.

Shloka 36 , 37, 38



O Lord, my body, my world, my relations, these are all creations of my own 'resolve'. They are all projected through and created from my own latencies and resolutions of previous lives. How shall I destroy these? You are clarifying that this mind and this body are a consequence of my aberrations. This entire creation, that which I call 'my own', Lord, You are referring to this as a 'card house'! Yes! I understand... I agree also... yet why can I not renounce attachment? Why can I not detach myself from these? I hear Thy command each day... I also believe it to be true... I am sincere too... yet I am unable to transcend this body idea. O Lord! Have mercy! Detachment from actions is also a definable goal... there is absolutely

no doubt about that! But one needs to think... at what stage and at what level can this detachment take place?

There are 3 platforms for action or *karma*: internal, external and body centric. Of these, the internal platform is the most important. Don't you know? All actions stem from the mind only. The inspiration for action, the endeavour itself, the reception of messages from outside and colouring those messages with antagonistic hues... all this happens within the department of the mind! The arising of inspiration and desire for action are all given to us as grace... a benediction of the Lord in accordance with the *karmas* of our previous births. The same providence fashions our intellect which caters to the fulfilment of our desires. This endeavour has been continuing since so many years. Many a time, this world was renounced, worldly objects were renounced, wealth and fame too were renounced... Now renounce your attachment with this body and your world which relates to this body.

Your desire is sincere. You aspire for persevering devotion. You seek that yearning for the Divine, but your anguish is not sufficient. So what can one do, except appeal? If sufficient power is not given from That Power House, then one can only appeal to the Master. If He so desires, He shall accede to your appeal and shower His grace. You know that your desire

and your inspiration are dependent on providence. And it is in accordance with this providence that these sense organs go into the external world and perform action. Each night this mind returns, having 'earned' in the objective world. This is not in my control. But all that matters are your reactions towards the sense enjoyment, gains and losses... these reactions embroil you in sin. This is sin. This is what leads to your degradation. These attachments and repulsions are your bondages. They are the seeds of havoc. Your thought processes based on your values, and your inspiration to action are pre-planned. Therefore accept all the joys and sorrows you encounter. Do not protest or cry. Receive them with devotional acceptance as the Lord's gift to you. Qualities interact with other qualities, and the sense organs perform their natural actions in accordance with the motivation received from Providence. We can close the windows of attachment and repulsion. Simply do all and accept all with complete indifference.

The vapours of thoughts and concepts and beliefs that arise from the mindstuff, the innermost core, become clouds that bring rain once again... do not allow this 'rain' of *sanskaras* or latencies to repeatedly vaporize with the onslaught of attachments and repulsions... only to fill the pond of your mindstuff with even more *sanskaras* yet again! Build a strong dam created by the repetition of the Lord's Name within, so that ever new *sanskaras* cannot be created to overflow once again into a new life! This only is in your control. Accept Destiny.

You feel that you will be free of sin if you distance yourself from action? Actions are born of nature. If you renounce actions, confusion is inevitable. If the mind has resolved to kill someone, the action has been performed. The sin has happened. If sometimes, without any intention, bound by the flow of destiny, you automatically kill someone with complete indifference, and without any aberration in the mind, this will not be a sin. Such a deed shall not taint us, because of the complete non attachment. We have to reach this stage. No matter what juncture we are at, even if we do not perform actions, if we worry, when we abstain from deeds or if we neglect our so called duties, we have not renounced this mind.

So you had better do your duty... your *dharma*... and practice non attachment.

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगेत्विमां शृणु ।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥३९॥

Bhagwan says to Arjuna:

This intellectual wisdom has been related to you as ‘Sankhya’ - now hear it in relation to Yoga; possessed of such an intellect you will be freed from the bondage of karma.

Shloka 39

Listen O *Sadhak* (Aspirant)! The Lord is talking to **you**. First of all, you must relinquish partaking of all sense enjoyments. It is this which is continually misleading and waylaying you from the path. Keep a ‘fast’... as it were, from material objects. Don’t you know... this entire world constitutes an ‘object’! The world is objective... it is the sense organs, which like agents, bring messages within... they bring invitations for sense enjoyment. You must reject all these invites! Hold only the Lord’s invitation close to your heart! Only then will the sense organs not receive their diet of the objective world! They will then starve and ‘come to terms’. They will divert themselves from extroversion to introversion. When they find no food outside, the mind (master) will stop its external excursions and will go in search of nourishment within. This is what will aid me in abiding with my Lord.

But what shall I do Ram... these senses are habituated in grazing on these external pastures. These ‘horses’ of the senses eat only this external ‘grass’! Pray tell me... how shall I control them? O mind! You have again become deceitful! You are again beginning to find excuses! The mind is not happy without its servitors! So Lord Krishna says, in order to tempt me, sway me, to make the remedy more palatable, “If you remain devoid of external sustenance, I will meet with you!”

O mind! I have still not been able to free myself of you... now I say, ‘After all, the sight of these eyes, the hearing of these ears, the touch of this skin, the taste of this tongue and the smell of the nose, why should I renounce these?’ O Ram! Bestow Thy Grace! May I hear only Thee... as the flute of this life plays... May these eyes see only Thee... and may I dance only before Thee! The Kath Upanishad says, ‘You think you live because of this breath... if you don’t breathe, then you don’t live?!’ O foolish one... do not labour under any illusion. Any such causes cannot kill even this physical body of yours. Your being exists because of the sap of life it receives from Ram Himself. He is the Sustainer... external agents have nothing to do with it! ... yet, how shall this foolish being attain That realization? O mind! Use only those organs of perception and action, which follow His path... which go out merely to collect the material for the Yagya (sacrificial worship) towards my goal.

Now they say, even if the senses are denied sense enjoyment through compulsion or force, they will continue to yearn for that enjoyment. The after taste of those sense objects will continually haunt them. After all, the senses have been habituated to dwelling in these sense objects life after life!



O foolish one! At least try! Even at the risk of death! The Lord Himself will do the rest. Distance yourself from these objects of sense... try to look within. If your desire is true, you will inevitably attain Ram Himself. If you do, then, that is your very goal! Then you will never leave Him!

My mind dances in ecstasy even at this very thought. I have understood. Until all my senses have not converged in a one pointed search for Thee, I will not reach Thee. All sense organs must be **constantly** devoted to you... they must **constantly** tread the path of *Shreya*... O Lord! Lead me on! Give me the strength to surrender myself to Thee! Let Thy service and obedience of Thy command become my greatest joy!

They have thus far, defined *Sankhya* Yog. Now hear about the *Yoga* of the Intellect. In *Sankhya*, (*shlokas* 10-20) they have defined the Real. They have separated the Real from the Unreal. Now they are embarking on the *Yoga* of the intellect.

Understand... it is Destiny that engrosses you in action. In this realm, the unreal seems as Real.

Now they describe another route so that you may determine what is your duty.

Both *Sankhya* *Yoga* and the *Yoga* of the intellect reach the same goal. But, in case you fear that you may not reach your goal through mere

objective knowledge, they have revealed two paths. At first the Lord has attracted your interest towards this path. He has raised your eagerness to know more... so that you can realize that that which you have desired so far, that which you have loved, which you have thought of as 'your all', that is transient! Those which you have so far considered to be your gains and losses, those 'attainments' for which you employed your body, mind, wealth, and all your faculties, were a meaningless waste of efforts... because all these endeavours were pre-determined by Destiny!

Now they talk of the method of attaining Sat... the Truth.
Both paths lead to the same end.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्॥४०॥

Now Bhagwan glorifies that intellect, the realisation of which establishes one in Yoga.

Any effort made towards the realisation of this intellect is never wasted; nor can it yield negative fruit. Even the slightest usage of this intellect helps one to transcend the greatest fear.

Shloka 40

Why am I feeling defeated and therefore anxious? Why am I sitting thus... devoid of any endeavour... bereft of my 'bow'?

"Come! Do not fear!" Why do You entice me with these words, Lord? It is good You have beckoned thus to me... because I had withdrawn from Thee... annoyed!

Now You say, from all directions, this inviting you! A prophetic voice resonates again and again... Nature calls out... "Do not be anxious... do not relinquish your courage! Arise! Gird yourself. See... the morn is about to dawn... The rays of That Compassionate One merge dusk into dawn. So often one almost reaches one's goal and still falls short! Yet, the traveller rises again! Continue to walk... even if you fall, walk again! Equipped with a strong determination and with faith, continue your journey. Await My Grace. Let all your weaknesses be. They will fall off by themselves. You continue to proceed with full fortitude and clear resolve. Hasten! Begin to run towards your goal! Dive headlong into it!"

How long will you continue to fight your desires one by one? Your

weaknesses will become a demoralizing force! These are afflictions of the body... symptoms of this 'body-self' disease. Sometimes death infuses fear into me, at other times, the worry of fame and defame afflicts me!

Your sorrow is justified from your point of view. But leave it all to Him. Give this endeavour of *sadhana* your all. You have partaken of all worldly enjoyments for so many years... now only a short while remains. Ignore your weaknesses... how long will these weaknesses pursue you if you are completely indifferent towards them? This is positive *sadhana*.

There are diamonds in the water, but the moss on the surface is hiding them. The water is cold. But if you remain afraid, you will not find the precious jewel. Just give your all to the attainment of That Supreme Goal with His name upon your lips. If you do not attain your goal in this life, so what? Start your endeavour immediately, and you will surely attain it in your next life!



Look how compassionate is That Lord! In order to augment your enthusiasm, He says... “O *sadhak*... do not be fearful!” The paths of *Shreya* and *Preya* are very different. Worldly efforts which seem to be spontaneous and having immediate and proportionate gains and losses as fruits, are actually decided by destiny. These results seem to be effects of the immediate cause (effort), but in reality these don't have any relation with each other as such! Whatever you had to receive through providence, will certainly be yours, no matter what the present circumstances! The divine path is truly blessed with celestial events.

The 'accounting' of life covers several life spans! Even a small reservoir can contain the potency of several horse power of energy! Similarly, even baby steps taken towards the Supreme Goal can cover a great distance. You still get afraid... isn't it? You feel that if death overtakes you before the completion of your *sadhana*, you will neither belong to this world nor to the realm of the Supreme? The Lord is assuring you... 'Do not fear! Any efforts in this direction shall not remain fruitless!'

I have not walked even 5% on this path throughout my life... yet I have gained 100% happiness! Do you not see... worldly accumulations and wealth are inevitably accompanied by worry, chaos and disorder... their relationship is as close as a wife with her spouse! Wealth and other material gains are never attained without these accompaniments... these essential characteristics! Also, worldly endeavour can come to naught... it can also lead to negative results. You could invest Rs.10,000/- and it could all finish... it could lead to extreme loss! You may even have to spend another Rs.10,000/- to save yourself!

But do you know? There is no loss on the path to my Beloved. There is only positive gain. And then, not a proportionate gain... one can harvest a gain far greater than the effort! Any fruit of endeavour on this path may be delayed, but will ultimately be received with complete compound interest! Slowly, the divine wealth of this realm is accumulated... when it becomes sufficient, He bestows the gift of Supreme peace against the surety of this divine wealth!

The same Gita, which was once difficult to understand, which raised doubts... (often, even the interest waned)... today, it has revealed its essence to the intellect! One day it suddenly dawns its secrets upon the mind... reveals its Truth to the *sadhak*! This is the *prasaad* of That One's Grace... what else? He has Himself come down and revealed His Essence. He is within and Omnipresent!

Those Rishis of yore who identified with Him, are also ever present... without the limits of time and space! Imagine! Shankaracharya Himself has emerged from the cave of the heart. Whosoever the aspiring *sadhak* invokes, shall reveal Himself before such a one. He becomes a living pilgrimage himself!

One day He shall Himself knock at your door. With the high power of this 'lever' of invocation and yearning, He shall Himself be enforced to come to his devotee.

But Lord Ram Himself is my lever! He will Himself wash away all sin. O mind! Knowing this, if we do not come to our senses and we continue to accumulate artificial paper flowers of the world, then a terrible fall (degradation) is inevitable. Come! There is still time! Rise! Come to the path!

...to be continued

Awaken... Awaken... Awaken!

ABHA BHANDARI



Never has life seemed so fragile...
Here one moment... gone the next...
Yamraj seems to have divided Himself into myriad parts
because He has been designated to 'take home' countless souls
to their final destination...
And obey He must!

How often the Scriptures spoke this Truth... 'Life is transient...'
As the wave rises in the ocean... and lapses back into the ocean's embrace...
so shall life emerge from That Substratum
and so shall it merge into That One too!



Yet, how difficult it was to fathom this Truth,
Because this world, gifted to me by the Divine, enticed me continually...
Beckoned to me... wrapped me around its little finger
and glorified in its victory over me.

And I, blind to my continual descent...
into the abyss of attachment to the transient,
Celebrated my little 'victories',
Brandished my newfound acquisitions,
And feasted on those little 'trinkets'...
the procurement of which became the reason for my existence.

So often Ma warned me
"None of these can you carry with you...
...when the whistle of the train blows for your final journey!"
But I heeded not even the prophetic voice of my Divine Mother
And I continued to collect those empty shells on the beach of time,
Which would be carried away...
with the next wave of the ocean on the sands.



Why did I not heed Ma's voice when She told me...
"Keep your luggage packed... the next moment could be your last..."
And I counted my years and said...
"Surely there are many more allotted to me...
...Let me collect enough to see me through the rainy climes of life...
when the last moment approaches, I shall gather my belongings!"

And in these precious moments of life,
I continue to squander the blessed opportunity given to me!

The Opportunity...

...to pay homage to That **Vaishwanar** Who abides in all
...to accept all given to me not as my 'right' but with immense gratitude
...to refrain from being a thief and claiming as 'my own'...
that which I had never 'earned'
...to pass through this life indeed as a traveller...
without clinging to every scene that passed by!

And in doing so, I lost sight of That Truth which was verily mine
That Beauty which the Lord had scattered all around me...
if only I had eyes to see.

And then Ma said again...

"Never mind child... even if you did not awaken when I alerted you,
Awaken now!

There is no clearer picture you will ever see of the fragility of life...
When all around you are being carried to their ultimate resting place
When the fire of one pyre barely burns to cinder
and the next fire is readied to burn another corpse...
When the wails of human beings surround you in continuum...
Do you still labour under your disillusion?
Do you still believe that this 'corpse' you call your body
shall live to eternity?



Awaken... awaken... awaken...
How much more will it take to awaken
And bow in utter humility
And enfold all in your embrace of 'LOVE ALL'?

‘Painful’ Experiences

PURNIMA

An episode of physical pain recently made me realize how my whole attention was focused on that one organ of my body. Every other issue seemed to fade in the background. Once I was recovering, I couldn’t help but reflect on how Param Pujya Ma dealt with pain.

We’ve heard that she had problems with her legs and poor blood circulation since an early age. Yet that never hampered her from taking up physical education as a career and excelling at every sport she took up. There were times she even fainted due to the pain but she never let it affect her day to day activities. In fact her plea to the Master was that the pain may strike any part of her body but never ever enter her heart because that was where her Beloved Lord resided.

And then there’s mental agony. This is mostly on account of our own tendencies like fear, guilt or a feeling of inadequacy. Dwelling on these can lead to anguish and even depression. There’s a term much used these days – overthinking. We ruminate on our problems and consequently they appear bigger and more intense. As they rightly say, “solve the problem or leave the problem, don’t live with the problem.”

And how did Ma deal with her mind? She took it to task in no uncertain terms! Once a slightly uncharitable thought crossed her mind regarding a particular girl. Not willing to give a free reign to her mind, she went and told that same girl what her mind was thinking about her. The girl in question thought Ma had lost it because no one exposes their own selves thus... and went about defaming Ma to all. But Ma’s mind never disturbed her again!

Pain at the spiritual level could be longing for the Master. A true devotee would not be able to bear any separation from the Source or the True Essence. This is something we can only conceptualize because we are too bound by our bodies. Ma’s ‘pain’ can be felt when she cries out:

तेरी बिरह अग्न में राम, बस पल पल जलती जाऊँ मैं।
जल जल कर जब राख बँवूँ, तो तुझ में समा ही जाऊँ मैं।।

*“May I ever ‘burn’ every moment in this flame of yearning for Thee...
And when I am thus to ashes reduced, may I be absorbed in Thee...”*



Param Puja Ma

Arpana

Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,
Karnal, Haryana, India

June 2021

The Heart of Arpana

Sadhana Diwas and Mahasamadhi

Sadhana Day, on 9th March and Mahasamadhi Divas 16th April, were both celebrated within the hearts of Arpana family and friends in prayerful acknowledgement of the Life and Word of Param Puja Ma, which have ignited new meaning to our lives. Family and friends of Arpana gathered throughout the day on the Zoom platform, sharing prayers, *bhajans*, and enlightening videos of Ma's *satsangs*. This spiritual elixir infused the hearts of all with the love and light of 'Urvashi'. Thus, these days of great import at Arpana, were spent in silent homage and gratitude.



Arpana's stage productions 'Kenopanishad' and 'Raja Ram' were also shared through Zoom and welcomed greatly, as they reinforced the Spiritual message that ever radiated from Param Puja Ma.

Remembering Puja Chhote Ma and Puja Papaji on the anniversary of their passing



A deep debt of gratitude was offered to both Chhote Ma and Papaji, Dr. JK Mehta, whose role in our lives was immense, adding warmth and a wealth of spiritual learning and meaning.



Arpana Hospital Steps Up!

Second Wave of COVID-19

The second wave beginning in March 2021 was much larger than the first, with shortages of vaccines, hospital beds, oxygen cylinders and other medicines throughout the country also being felt at Arpana Hospital.



Arpana Hospital started operating its Covid Ward on an emergency basis on 25th April, 2021. About 90 patients have been treated in our Covid ward up till end May. Caring and compassionate donors stepped up to provide hospital beds, ventilators, oxygen concentrators, cardiac monitors and bipap machines as well as consumables like PPE kits, masks, etc.

We owe the deepest gratitude and respect to our Hospital staff of doctors, nurses, nursing aides, ward boys, etc. who are working day and night – putting their own lives at risk – to save the lives of our Covid patients.

Generous Donors give for Covid Relief



Several organisations and individuals from India and abroad have given funds and equipment for COVID Relief

Covid Outreach: Testing & Awareness Camps in Haryana Villages

Arpana is holding outreach COVID camps in villages to test for the virus with the help of local sarpanches, Asha and Anganwadi workers, ANMs and Arpana SHG women members.

From May 18-30, 11 villages have been visited, 1262 patients examined by doctors and 624 tests done.



Haryana Initiatives

Welcoming new SHG members with Workshop and Holi Celebrations



Presenting effective procedural kits to new SHG members

On 23rd March, 130 members of 7 established self-help groups (SHGs) invited 100 members of 9 new self-help groups for a workshop about SHGs as well as to celebrate the joyful festival of Holi.

They informed the new SHG members about the importance and effectiveness of SHG procedures and shared experiences of how their lives have been transformed. SHG women presented dances and songs and a play based on a real life story of

transformation. Holi was celebrated with coloured powders and flowers.

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

Himachal

Tailoring and Knitting Classes were organized by Arpana in villages Dalpa and Chabdi in April 2021, attended by 39 women.

Irrigation Tanks: Two irrigation tanks were constructed in village Nagali and Dalpa during April 2021 with the heartwarming participation of local villagers and generous support given by Arpana Guernsey.



Threshing out Their Problems

Sudha, from village Kakela, has been a member of a self-help group facilitated by Arpana for some years. Due to the Pandemic and Lockdown, Sudha's husband lost his job in a hotel in Khajjiar. The wheat harvest was ready so both husband and wife decided to take a loan of Rs.50,000 from her group for a thresher. This wise decision enabled them to rent out their thresher for harvesting to farmers from three villages and enabled them to earn Rs.18,000 during the difficult months of the lockdown.

Our deep gratitude to the Tides Foundation (USA) and Arpana Guernsey, for grants for rural development programs in Himachal Pradesh

Molar Bund

At the start of the new academic year in April 2021, Arpana distributed dry rations and stationery to all Balvatika (Pre-Nursery) students

Joining Arpana's Balvatika

"My daughter, Pihu, joined Arpana's Balvatika just before the Lockdown, so I thought the beginning of her education will not be smooth. But the efforts made by the teachers of Arpana Balvatika, especially the class teacher, revived my hopes. I want to convey my sincere thanks to all the teachers of Arpana Balvatika who provided online classes with lessons and homework and quickly responded back after the submission of the work done by my daughter."



*Mr. Pradeep Bishwas
with daughter Pihu*



Prize Distribution

As an incentive and motivation, Arpana distributed prizes for the students who secured the highest ranks in their respective classes.

A few prize recipients

Arpana is deeply grateful to Aviva (UK), Essel Foundation (New Delhi), Technip India, and Arpana Canada for education support

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.

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

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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.

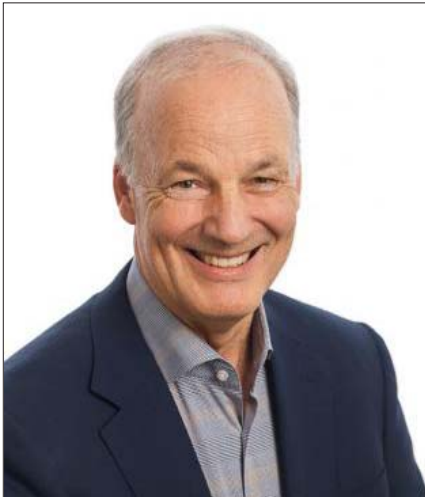
Information & Resources Office: 91-184-2390905 Executive Director: 91-9818600644

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

A Debt of Deep Gratitude



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Barbara and Tom Sargent for their incredible, sustained support over the years in the preparation of videos containing Ma's precious Word – Urvashi.

The precious knowledge of life obtained through these videos processed thus, has been the sustaining life force of so many through these extremely troubled times of Covid 19. When ill health overtook almost every household through the past two years, when hearts were troubled and distraught with loved ones in the grip of Covid... and loneliness preyed the minds of a large part of the populace, this 'knowledge of life' became a veritable protective shield that not only protected, but also healed the innermost being.

Since Arpana members and also many friends and associates all over India and indeed the world, were not able to get together to absorb the calming and soothing knowledge of Life as explained so lucidly by Param Pujya Ma, these 'satsangs' were shared over the Zoom platform... and proved to be a veritable balm for the soul. These 'Life sessions' as they may be called, empowered all the listeners to not only endure the onslaught of the virus, but also inspired them to extend their support wholeheartedly to our surrounding suffering communities.

Many of us have endured the onslaught of Covid too, and even needed hospitalization. Many of us have also lost 'our own' in this terrible pandemic. But inner strength was always found in the soul stirring *satsangs* of Ma captured in the videos that were shared on Zoom. Never has anyone felt alone or uncared for...

It has now been over 18 months since we have all been able to meet, discuss and savour these lessons of life, person to person... but never has anyone felt unaided. Indeed, we have all been together in the aura of our Spiritual Mother, enabled by the immense support given by Barbara and Tom Sargent. We can only extend our heartfelt gratitude to them... maybe they cannot even gauge the extent to which their precious love has circulated amongst all of us and made such a difference to our lives.

Through these 18 months, several festive occasions have also been celebrated together on Zoom. Maybe more members joined us through the Zoom platform than could attend these celebrations in person!! So much has been made possible with the kind financial assistance from Tides Foundation.

A lot of videos have been readied so far through the help from Tides... and we look forward so very much to share all these videos with more and more people... and to spread the word of hope, love and care to all.

We can only say... we are incredibly grateful... and we will never forget!

