

That Priceless Ram being sold for Naught

*That priceless Ram being sold for naught!
Unawares this outrage took place;
O ignorant mind if you looked His way,
You'd have realized this disgrace.*

*You desire each object of the world, you fulfill every whim;
How will He – how can He come, you never yearn for Him!*

*You search the world with greedy eyes,
Its Creator lies hidden behind;
You watch His Creation with wondrous sighs,
But the Lord you never find.*

*Eternally in worldly objects lost, you never accept His grace;
In His gift you became engrossed, not a word in the Giver's praise!*

*Avariciously O Lord I watch...
This creation of Thine;
But the Giver of these gifts endowed?
I forget that Saviour of mine.*

*He stands instilled in everything, oh why can I not see?
In each thought His memory I'll bring, He is watching over me!*

Translated from Param Pujya Ma's original elucidation in Hindi given below

अनमोल राम बेमोल बिकें

अनमोल राम बेमोल बिकें, पर मन तू जाने न।
गर उसकी ओर निगाह करे, तो ही तो जाने न॥
कभी यह माँगे कभी वह माँगे, कभी उसको माँगे न।
वह आये तो कैसे आये, तू भी उसे माँगे न॥
लोलुप्त नयन से जग निरखे, कभी राम को देखे न।
जिस राम की लीला सारी है, उसको तू देखे न॥
विषय समूह में तू खोई, वा कृपा तू माने न।
जिसने दी तुझको जग सारी, उसको पहचाने न॥
रचना उसकी यह जग छलिया, लोलुप्त हुए निहार रहे।
जिस राम की ही सब लीला है, उस सों बेमुख हुए॥

(अर्पणा प्रार्थना शास्त्र १, व. ७१ - १२.७.१९५९)

In Salutation to Urvashi...

Ma's Divine Word...

O gentle and purifying Urvashi... how softly but surely You flow through our hearts... ever purifying us with your strength of steel... yet healing us in Your loving embrace! You know when we pain within... and you come forth with all the answers to our questions... and how gloriously you flow as rejoicing in our hearts when we apply Your remedies in our lives and regain our strength!

You have never left our side... You are our Eternal Companion! You bring us the love of our beautiful Mother... and each time lead us that much closer to understanding Her mystical depths!

We pray for Your continued presence in our lives birth after birth... because indeed, You are our only anchor in the Real... and our only hope to lead us away from the unreal!

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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



In Continuation...

“When the King Himself has accepted you, why pursue His treasures?”
Param Pujya Ma defines clearly our present predicament of pursuing trivialities when the Supreme Divine One is ours for the asking! Yet we get waylaid by those very trivialities and have thus wasted many a precious opportunity in every lifetime.

It is never too late to awaken... reach out... and attain!

ABHA BHANDARI

Chapter 2

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥४४॥

Now the Lord says:

Those who are affected by such speech and who are attached to worldly enjoyment, they do not possess the determinate intellect that leads to samadhi – absorption in the Divine.

Shloka 44

They say that Dhanna the Lord's *bhakta*, attained Him in a stone idol! All you need is a firm determination, faith and a strong yearning. You know how your resolve dissolves when others come, talk and mislead you. Some, bound by *moha*, others with other ulterior motives... or for any other reasons... they all seek to waylay you, rob you. O foolish one, do not get ambushed thus. Nor must you get swayed from your one-pointed determination. Go forward with absolute faith. You get perplexed each time. Do you know... doubt is the most dangerous enemy you can have. Doubt can cause the sure death of your spiritual endeavour... your *sadhana*. Until you know your Divine Beloved completely, distance yourself from the world... sever your contact with sense objects. People merely disturb and shake you. To protect your *sadhana*, especially at the preliminary stages, is imperative.

A new flame has been ignited. It requires protection. At times, when it flickers, the Lord Himself helps to light it again. It is through the light of



this flame that you shall meet with your Lord. You have to conflagrate this flame to such an extent that it burns the intricate mesh of your *moha*! Forget all else... only remember Ram. Become silent to all else.

If you get into undesirable company, or if your destiny takes you away from your Liege, then chant 'Aum' continually, so that no other sound enters your ears! I can vouch that if you manage to do this, then Ram Himself will organize and control all your 'discussions'.

These flowery discussions of the world are the greatest disturbance on this path. Forget all. Remember your aim at all times. Dwell on Him one-pointedly. This world is ebbing away... scorched by the flame of the Lord, fuelled by your faith. **Protect yourself from the world. People rob you of your 'oil' and the flame begins to die.**

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥४५॥

The Lord continues:

The Vedas deal with the evolutes of the three gunas. O Arjuna! Rise above the three gunas and duality! Be steadfast in Truth and unconcerned about the preservation or fulfilment of wants and desires; abide in the Self.

Shloka 45

Whatever is happening, is transpiring because of the interaction of the *gunas*... or qualities. The Lord has led you to the crossroads. On one side lies *Yoga Kshem*, or the protection of your *sadhana*, and all the means required to obtain all the material necessities for sustaining life... and on the other, is

Ram Himself...
the *Atma*
Essence! He is saying "Choose whichever path you desire!" In the realm of the world, you can get joys and sorrows, life and death, and heaven too! But after harvesting the



joys of heaven, return you must! This is all that you will find on the material plane of Yoga Kshem.

On the other hand, leave all to Him and attain Him. He is That everlasting happiness. Look! Reactions cause latencies or *sanskaras*... but reactions are guided by extreme desires for the objective world. If your actions are tainted by your desire for joy, for fame and recognition, for wealth etc., your reactions too will be moulded accordingly. Your attachment to these will ensnare you in the web of *moha*. What else can be the consequence? Your 'challenge cup' should be the knowledge of the *Atma* Essence. This world is merely your arena of practice. 'Armaments' of the world will only augment duality. Your silence, your patience and your firm resolve are your principal supports.

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः सम्प्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥४६॥

The Lord says:

The wise sage who has realised the Atma, has as much utility for the Vedas as one has for a small reservoir in a place that is surrounded by water.

Shloka 46

A Brahmin who has obtained enlightenment, has the same use for the Vedas as one who stands at the brink of a vast sheet of water overflowing on all sides, has for a small reservoir of water. Here the Lord is exhibiting the satiety of the Illumined Soul. If one is standing before a pure sparkling

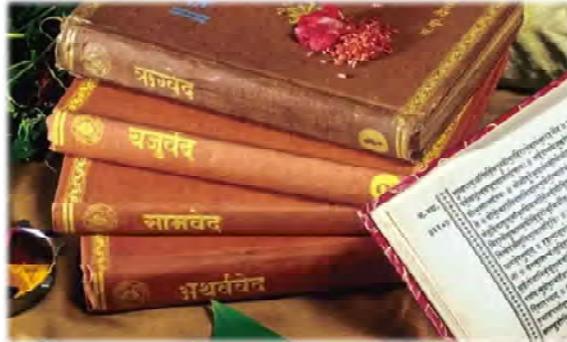


lake, why would one require a bucket full of water? Ever since That All-powerful Ram became my very own, why would I be selective and choose only one fraction of that power?

If I require food, a home, comforts

for the family, health etc. and I received some wealth, then all my requirements can be met with that wealth. All can be procured therefrom... all my requirements are merely derivatives of wealth. Similarly, if I know That *Brahm*, I can attain the entire world. Then why should I worry about anything else?

The entire Vedas and all other bodies of Spiritual knowledge are focused on the attainment of That Supreme One. If one has transitioned from study in class 1 to PhD, then why would one need to get back to the alphabet? Why bother how I found Him... once I have found Him, I have known



all. Then of what avail the knowledge of *ridhi siddhis*... or powers attained on the path? Of what use then even the Scriptures which merely instruct how to reach That One? If I have reached Delhi, I surely have no need for a time schedule of the journey! If I have received the pinnacle of happiness, of what avail are small pleasures? He is the goal... all else is secondary.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and other accompanying *sadhus* used to sit in one corner of the temple and recite the Gita. Their enunciation and intonation of the *mantras* and maybe their interpretations too would have been contrary





to the prevalent norms... but whosoever heard or read the Mahaprabhu's words, would get the feeling of Lord Krishna Himself sitting in the chariot before Arjuna and imparting knowledge of the Gita... and inevitably, tears of love would flow! This proves that words do not mean anything... it is the message given through the life and the inner essence of the being that make the difference. Therefore give wings to that 'inner being' and dissolve your entity at His

feet. Once you know That One, then Vedas and other Scriptures also shall have no meaning. One who has reached the goal has no use for the means to reach that goal!

The *Yoga Sutras* have expounded methods to control one's own mind and to know and control even another's mind. But do you know... if you attain *Brahm*, all this will follow naturally... automatically! When all 'powers' and all knowledge belong to That One, then why shall I seek to attain any power singly? If I attain That One, all else will follow also!

Lord! Guide me on and lead me to the right path. You are the substratum of all. Whosoever 'knows' you has attained all. Everything is contained in that 'knowledge.'

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥४७॥

Your right is only to perform action and not its fruits. Do not be attached to inaction, nor act only for the fruit.

Shloka 47

Now begins the *yoga* of the intellect... *buddhi yoga*. Until now, the Lord was only giving an 'introduction' to this path, in order to arouse the interest of the *sadhak*. In order to establish the importance of this path, He has said that even one step taken upon this path shall not go waste. Not only that, following this path, one can receive not only the 'principal' wealth one seeks but also its 'interest'... life after life! This path will also ensure the elimination of the fear of death!

The Lord then warns against the web of 'flowery speeches'! Such flowery speeches offer you enticements of heavenly pleasures. Yes... you can surely achieve such pleasures, but to what end? ...merely to again attain the same cycle of birth and death and sorrow?

Then again the Lord says, "All that is transpiring is the interaction of qualities." Good and bad are merely comparative concepts. O mind! Your aim is to dissolve in That Supreme One. If so, you must transcend all qualities (*gunas*). Worldly enjoyments are merely impediments on your path. You must rise beyond these. Keep your goal before you at all times, or else you will not be able to complete your *sadhana*... and when you attain That One, then He Himself will look after even your necessary wants and needs for living. Attainment of That One is the attainment of this entire world.

Now they speak of the direct method of attainment of That Divine Beloved. They describe the content of *sadhana*. The *sanskaras* or latencies of joys and sorrows are etched upon one's inner self. This reservoir of latencies reflect as inherent tendencies and clamour for completion again and again. These cannot be stopped. These can only be eliminated through other latencies. Mere spiritual knowledge does not help. One may know all, one may endeavour to raise tall structures of well planned intentions... but one storm... and these structures



collapse like a house of cards... and we fall yet again. Even while knowing these 'intentions' to be my worst enemies, I cannot leave them. Therefore, despite knowledge, we are unable to reach our goal. All my most sincere endeavours fail! The latencies of so many lives pull me again and again towards the material world.

The *yoga* of the intellect clarifies that all actions happen because we are bound by latencies which have created our destiny...these actions will necessarily happen! O Ram, what shall I do then? How can I quash these latencies? I plead with Thee... grant that these latencies of destiny do not 'rain' into the ocean once again. Pray create the dam of practical spiritual endeavour! Grant that a time comes when this ocean of latencies dries up and they are eliminated forever!

Listen! Your hunger for the fruits of your actions is causing this bondage – this attachment. Perform all actions that are destined. Do not yearn for their fruits.

The Lord has fully expanded here on the essence of the *yoga* of intellect. This is the only way to eliminate the latencies from this intellect that is labouring under the affliction of *sanskaras* of our past many births.

Sankhya knowledge is inherent in the knowledge of the *Atma* Self. It speaks of the method of self enquiry but does not seem to be easy and suitable for all. The Lord therefore explains to Arjuna, "Follow the *gunas* comprising your nature – your *bhava* or values. Accept all, but not with the intent of deriving any fruits." Concentration and self enquiry are methods towards the attainment of *yoga*. All paths of *sadhana* lead to the same Goal. The path we take differs in accordance with our nature and our values. This is necessary because of the varied temperaments of worldly folk. Some are active, some devotional, some contemplative. The active follow the path of *karma*, the emotional choose the path of devotion, and those of contemplative bent of mind adhere to *Gyan yoga*, or the *yoga* of knowledge. *Sadhana* begins with one's interaction with people... to serve them is to indirectly serve the Lord. Then the *sadhak* develops love and devotion and that leads to *gyan yoga*. We



start in accordance with our nature (*swabhav*) and destiny (*prarabd*), but end at the same Goal.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संडुगं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्धसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योगं उच्यते ॥४८॥

The Lord now says to Arjuna:

O Dhananjaya! Act without attachment, established in yoga and maintaining equanimity towards success or failure. Equanimity is yoga.

Shloka 48

How easily You have said Lord, that I should perform actions after establishing myself in Yoga with You... and You have also said that You are everywhere! Then how shall I establish myself in You? Only You can impart to me the gifts of devotion, faith, love and yearning... how can one come to Your feet without these?

O Lord! Grant me Thy Grace... grant that I may yearn only for Thee and see naught but Thee in all. You are explaining Your message to us... despite the fact that we are not worthy. It is said that this knowledge should not be given to one who is not worthy. O Ram! I hope I shall not misuse this gift given by Thee. My thoughts are not stable... I cannot concentrate... You have granted this knowledge to one who is totally undeserving! I am taking pride in propagating this knowledge... I am making an exhibition of it! Just as a beggar who suddenly comes upon a treasure and is beside himself with joy and cannot wait to show it off! So also Lord, You have given me this treasure... now give me the key of practical insight (*vivek*) so that I can dive into its mystical depths. How shall I ascend this state of *yoga*? Pray come and help me to be established in Thy meditation.



Relying upon the instigation of my latencies or *sanskaras*, my thoughts emerge and come into contact with sense objects, and partake of them. My desires and impulses are ever on the increase... ever tireless! My greed increases in ratio with my sense enjoyments. Death arrives... but my greed and yearning never cease. People come and go, but I continue to wander futilely amidst my latencies and mental tendencies. Thus I repeatedly fall into the cycle of birth and death... and yet I do not learn my lesson. You give me lessons, You give me knowledge... and I grasp Your message also... yet I am unable to extricate myself from this tangle of hopes and expectations.

It is said that when one receives just a glimpse of You, these organs of perception become quiescent and do not clamour for anything any more. Lord, grant me just a glimpse of Thee. Grant Thy Grace... I depend only on Thee. Who else can I turn to? Who else but Thee can grant me this equilibrium?

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥४९॥

Praising the *Yoga* of the Intellect, the Lord says:

O Arjuna! Actions are indisputably inferior to the Yoga of the Intellect. Take refuge in that Intellect, for those who are motivated by the fruit of action are pitiable.

Shloka 49

You have explained the *Yoga* of the Intellect and *Sankhya* *Yog* to me. Let me recount what I have understood...

Only You are Real in this world. All else is Unreal. All else is Your *Lila*... Your 'play'... just a recreation!

You are this entire Creation, but of all, only You are the Truth.

I have understood this... All is transient... false... my intellect too has understood this, yet I cannot live this Truth. I have accepted this knowledge but am unable to translate it into my life. If this knowledge which is understood by my intellect has not permeated my heart, of what avail is it?

Stone idols of the Lord are made in Jaipur... but those who create these 'images' do not have faith in them! Similarly, the presence of this knowledge in my intellect is like that idol carved by the sculptor... an image created by the resolve of that artist... that sculptor touches it everywhere while

carving it... yet it remains just a carving... until it is traditionally established in the temple... then that same 'image' becomes the Lord Himself! When that carver made the image, he had no faith in it... yet now he prostrates before it every day and seeks boons from that Lord!



Lord, similarly, knowledge of Thy Real Essence lies in my intellect... but will I ever be able to invoke Thee in the temple of my heart...? When will I be able to sit at Thy feet and wash the impurities from my heart with my tears? As of now, I have established Your Image in the 'show window' of my intellect! Now I seek to establish it in my heart. Lord! Grant me the alms of Love!

O foolish one! Look at the heredity you possess! The King Himself has accepted you. Why do you bother about petty officials any more? Why do you need to pander to them or seek their references or support? Why should I seek anything from anyone when I have attained all? If That One Who is the King of all has wed me, then of what am I afraid? If I have Thy support, then why seek support from anyone else? Why shall I wander thus?

O mind! That which you consider to be yours in the world, is not yours at all! It is transient. Even if you attain it today, it will be destroyed tomorrow. O Ram! You are the only Intransient Truth. Pray become my Support!

The Lord says, "Resort to the *Yoga* of the Intellect and come to Me... relinquish all other supports. You beggar! Why are you depending on everyone and everything? This is your greatest weakness and failing. Why do you take the support of this transient world? Come to Me... either in duality or in non duality... BUT take only My support. Relinquish your attachment to this world. Renounce attachments to your offspring... your servitors... etc. Leave all to Me"

Sadhana is our highest and Supreme duty... this is the highest *karma*... Let the *Aadi Guru* Himself decide the path you should undertake. Become completely entrenched in this *Yoga* of the Intellect. Yes. Completely.

Take the Refuge of That One Who has everything... to Whom everything belongs... Who IS everything! Why do you stretch out your begging hand for wealth, for fame, for a dwelling, a job... why do you beg from your brother, sister, mother, father? It is like begging from another beggar! What can they give you? Why are you so dependent on seeking these alms? Arise! Seek alms from Ram... Who IS ALL!



He says “Remember Whose child you are!” Indeed, you are the Prince of Wales... the Crown Prince of That Lord Who is the King of this entirety! Come, just recognize That One of which you are a part. Exploit your heredity and potential! This entire world is yours! Enjoy it with intoxication! Drink of the wine of This Divine Essence... and then seek all. All is yours. Why do you seek only small portions in order to subsist? When you are ill, you want to get well in order to prolong life for a little while more! What difference will a few years make to you?

Anyway... what matters is that you awaken before this body departs. Then what difference will death make? Why do you seek the fruits of your actions like a beggar? You are the heir of That Divine One. Know yourself and then decide what you desire in this world. You want this body, wealth, recognition etc. These are yours in any case! You are like a King who seeks alms from his own kingdom!

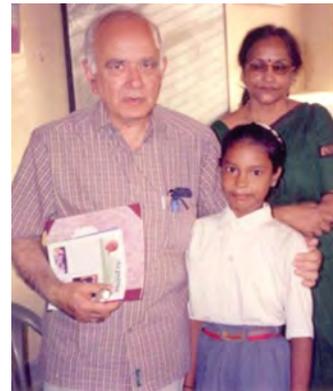
You hold the feet of the doctor to save your life... You hold the feet of your boss to obtain some wealth... Don't you realize... what can they give to you? They... who are beggars themselves? You have donned so many bodies in as many births... to try to establish bodily relationships is sheer madness. This is the cause of all worry. Separate the two.

...to be continued

Our Humble Tribute



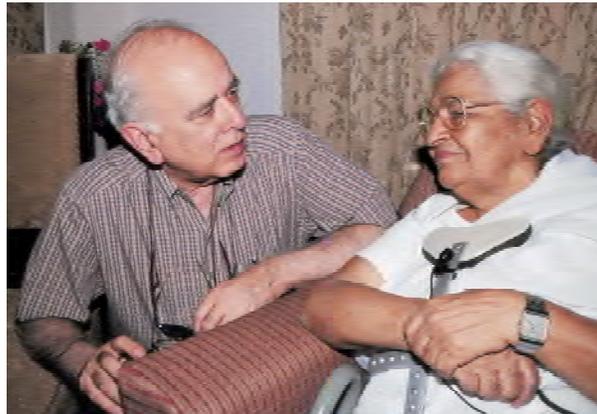
to Dr. Raghu Gaiind



who Epitomised the Spirit of Arpana

All of us at Arpana feel the devastating loss of Dr. Raghu Gaiind in our hearts, where he had taken up residence for so many years! From the first getting to know him nearly 40 years ago, his charm, wit and kindness towards the vulnerable drew him like a magnet into the Arpana circle.

He took Param Pujya Ma's words to heart when she said, "The Scriptures tell us to earn with two hands and give with a thousand!"

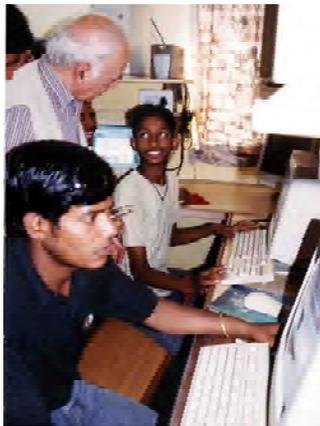


By forming the Arpana Charitable Trust, UK, he has enabled Arpana Services to expand to serve thousands of the underprivileged who, otherwise, had no opportunity to rise above the deprivation of their birth.

One of his special interests was Arpana Hospital, an institution to serve rural folk through modern medical care.



He helped expand the hospital from a two storey to a four storey facility, helped set up and equip the ICU and provided other equipment and infrastructure.

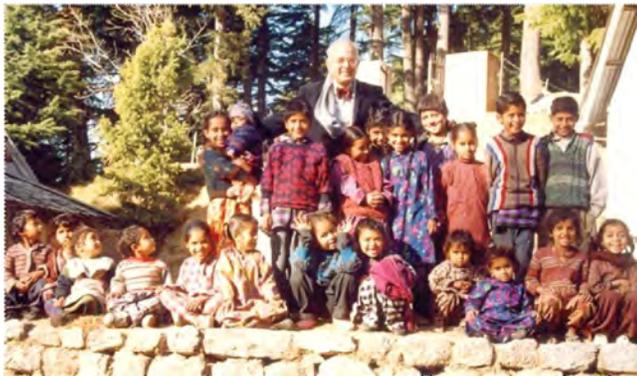


Not only as an institution, Raghu ji took a personal interest in everyone he met and, for so many individuals who had no resources, he was their guide and support.

He gave lectures to the doctors and nurses to upgrade their medical knowledge, especially in his field of neurology. His guidance to all of us was rich with his experience.



From the villages of
deprived communities in
Haryana...



...to the heights of
Himalayan hamlets,

...to hundreds of migrant
slum children,



...he served in all humility, spreading knowledge and services. Informing,
participating – Raghu ji held a special place in everyone's heart.

*Dr. Gaiind had a deep impact on Arpana – not only in building up the
organisation and its institutions but, especially, in our hearts and lives.
May our loving memories eclipse the pain of separation and may he
live in our hearts in love and peace.*



Several of Arpana family members expressed their condolences:

Dr. Ela Anand: “He was so good to Arpana... through Arpana UK and his own personal efforts. When Dr. Anand passed away, he came all the way from UK to offer his condolences. May his soul rest in peace.”

Abha Bhandari: “He was a truly compassionate and loving soul... a beautiful heart that throbbed for those in need... the sort of human being which is becoming rare in this world of turmoil. Arpana has lost a wonderful friend and benefactor!”

Deepak Dayal: “We were all blessed to have walked with him on the path of service and at every step he was a great inspiration. His contribution was immense and there was never an occasion when his support was sought and it was not immediately, spontaneously and humbly given.”

Sushma Agarwal: “We will always remember Dr. Gaiind as a beautiful, compassionate human being. Last time when he came to Delhi, he made it a point to visit Molarbund in spite of his disabilities. He will always be remembered very fondly.”

Anne Robinson: “Feel deep sorrow for the loss of our dear Dr. Gaiind. He was so involved with those in difficult situations – always being of help, always caring, always compassionate. It is amazing how he gave so much of himself for others. He has enriched us and will be a part of our lives forever.”

Ravi Dayal: “Prayers for his soul. His heart really throbbed for the weaker sections of society. His identification with Arpana was a shining example which we will remember and be inspired by.”

Niriti Vaid: “We consider ourselves fortunate to have been part of his beautiful journey of service of humanity. What a beautiful life, so much to learn. Each of us have so many personal memories of the Gaiind’s. They were truly an integral part of the spirit of Arpana.” ❖

Your Grace fills my Life to Overflowing

Part 5

ABHA BHANDARI

*In continuation of the story of my life
in the Embrace of a Divine Mother...*

Ma's Family

Where does your family end?

This was a thought provoking question which Ma often asked of us. Does it comprise only of your blood relations? Does it terminate with your acquaintances and friends? Ma's own life mirrored the perfect answer to this question. Ma embraced the entire world as her 'family'.



Ma's immediate family comprised her parents, two sisters, and five brothers... she often told us laughingly, that they were a complete 'cricket team'... if 2-3 other cousins who were also brought up by her parents, were counted. Her relationship with her family is a chapter in itself... but at that time, what amazed me most was her relationship with her father! 'Pitaji' as she called him respectfully,

was an immensely learned person... well versed in the Vedanta and the principal scriptures of the Hindu faith. Whereas most of her family were unable to accept Ma's sudden change of lifestyle once her '*sadhana*' began, Pitaji, being so knowledgeable himself, recognized Ma's inner being.

Since Partition had taken place, Ma's parents lived with Ma's eldest sister, Nirmal Anand, at Social Workers Home, 7 Model Town, Karnal... a home that had been given to her by the Government and had steadily grown because of the tremendous service



she rendered to refugees and destitute women who abounded in those days. Training these women in the finest traditions of cross stitch embroidery, she would arrange the sale of these items crafted by them under her watchful eye, and with the proceeds, she would help many families who were burdened by poverty.

When Ma came to live at Madhuban, just 8 kms away from Karnal, Pitaji began to attend the Sunday *Satsangs* held at the temple at Madhuban. So overwhelmed was he by the pristine knowledge that flowed from Ma like

a veritable Ganga, that he spontaneously began to address her as 'Ma' whenever he asked her a question in the *mandir*, or whenever he was talking about her with others... a fact that amazed me completely. Whenever he was alone with her however, he would affectionately call her '*kaaki*' (daughter). What was even more amazing to me was that whether he called her 'Ma' or '*kaaki*'...



it made no difference to her... for her, he was her revered father... always admired as 'Pitaji'... and later even addressed as 'Pitamaha'! She tended to him lovingly whenever he fell ill... and was often found sitting at his feet in the emerging 'garden' at Madhuban.



The kitchen at Madhuban has always strictly cooked and served vegetarian fare. So much so, that there was a long period of time when the food was devoid of any onion or garlic too. Ma often referred to the Gita, which defined the attributes of *satvik* food, and recommended *satvik* food to nurture the body and the mind. We will shortly come back to this... at present, let us return to Pitamaha.

In his later years, Pitaji had been at Madhuban for some weeks and was extremely unwell; his health was steadily declining, and his intake had decreased drastically. Taking note of his speedy decline, the doctor

recommended chicken soup for him to sustain him and to hasten his recovery. The Ashram kitchen would naturally be unable to provide this, therefore, in order to make sure that he got this critical 'medicine' every day, Ma organized a makeshift kitchen in her own room, where she requested me to make the soup for Pitaji. This happened for a good 2 months or so, until Pitaji recovered his strength and his good health again.



This incident also provoked me into wondering... who was Ma? Despite the fact that she was so strictly vegetarian herself, how readily she not only acceded to, but actively organized a non-vegetarian preparation to be made in her own bedroom! The good health of Pitaji was paramount... there was not even a second thought of what people would think or say... nor that the soup would be prepared in her own bedroom! Here was someone who transcended all societal barriers and was sensitive only to the other's need... naught else mattered! The incident left me completely befuddled!

This may be an appropriate place to mention that when we met Ma, we, the Bhandari family, were all non-vegetarians. Whenever Ma was visiting our home in Defence Colony, we would ensure that only



vegetarian food was prepared in our kitchen... but after she left, we resumed our normal 'diet'. Never once did Ma insist that we become vegetarians! How much freedom she gave us was evident from the fact that it was almost after 10-12 years of meeting Ma that we conferred with each other and decided that in deference to our 'Guru' it was time we adopted the diet that the scriptures recommended as 'healthy' and which was recommended by Ma through practice! Such was our beautiful Guru, who preferred always to teach by precept, and allowed her children to change within naturally rather than enforcing a change in their nature and lifestyle.

Freedom was the path that Ma offered to us. She would explain what was good for us, but the choice of following her advice was left completely to us. It is another matter that we often used the long rope she gave us to hang ourselves! ...but that never meant that she restricted us in any way. "Let's play the game of love..." was a song she often sang to us with

great joy... and this indeed was the way she 'brought us up'! Indeed, she was completely democratic... but when any matter affecting the wellbeing of another came up, she became a 'benign dictator'... no wonder that each one under her umbrella, felt supremely safe and secure.

Ma's protective cocoon was invincible. It not only had the ability to protect, but also to change hearts. Her heart encompassed all in her tender care... verily as her own family.

There comes to mind the incident of a young boy, approximately 18 years of age, who, due to his bad habits, had been brought by his mother to Ma. "He will spoil his younger brothers too if he continues to stay in our family" she said. Ma's answer, as always, was simple. "Don't worry, leave him here." The young boy, already revolting within, began to stay at the Ashram. He was given tasks to do, as we all were given. Agriculture, purchases, including vegetables for the kitchen and other odd jobs were entrusted to him. Once, when Ma was away to Dalhousie, she received a long distance call from Madhuban. (In those days, calls had to be booked through the telephone exchange, and would sometimes take a long time to connect). Papaji, Dr. JK Mehta was on the line. Agitated, he told Ma that there had been a robbery at the Ashram, and the police had discovered that the young boy was the thief! They had taken the young boy to jail, but the boy kept making only one request..."Please call Ma... please tell her I am in jail." Papaji said to Ma, "It is good his theft has been discovered and he has been put in jail. I have simply rung you to tell you what has happened."

It was 10 pm. Hill roads at that time would be forsaken... and to travel those roads at night was not just tedious but also dangerous. Ma simply said to us "Pack up... we have to leave for Madhuban right now!" She arrived at Karnal early in the morning, having travelled all night, and went straight to the jail to bail out the young miscreant! Having brought



him home, she explained to the family...“Had it been your son, what would you have done?” How implicit was the young man’s belief in his ‘Ma’... he knew she would not endure that he spent even a single night in jail! It cannot be said that he changed immediately thereafter... the journey was long... but the very fact that he now holds a responsible job of tutoring young minds, speaks for itself.

Similarly, an emotional tussle took place in the Ashram between one young lady and some seniors, who took her to task for what they considered to be insulting behaviour by her. She immediately turned to Ma. That night was one I can never forget. Ma had to demonstrate to the seniors that they could not be excused their intolerance. She expected higher standards from them! She therefore proclaimed “I will leave the Ashram tomorrow morning with the young lady. No one else shall go with us. Nor shall I take anything from the Ashram... not even the vehicle. We will find our transport ourselves... or else, we will walk!”

Each one of us could not endure a single passing moment. I remember that night, the electricity had gone and I was fanning Ma as she slept... just one thought kept gnawing at me... will I never see Ma again? I knew that she meant every word that she had spoken... and I also knew that every adult and child of the Ashram was heartbroken at the thought of Ma’s leaving us... so sure were we that she would keep her word! By some sheer miracle, the next morning the young lady in question, now reassured by Ma’s proclamation, and having received the apology of the seniors concerned, said to Ma “Please let us stay on... I now have no complaints against anyone!”

How could Ma, already frail in health, decide to leave even the roof above her head forever... for the sake of someone who may not even remain with her once her requirements were met elsewhere? This was the astounding quality of reassurance that Ma would give to all who came to her.

This incident simply echoed several incidents from Ma’s past...

– Her assurance to her classmate in school, who had failed her class and requested Ma urgently to stay back with her in the same class, since she had no other friend! And how Ma readily convinced her mother to talk to the Principal of that school to allow her daughter to stay back in the same class for a year just to strengthen the foundation of her subjects... knowing

full well that her so called 'friend' would readily leave her as soon as she had secured other friendships in the new class!

– Her protection of the domestic maid at their house, who was trembling with apprehension, having dropped the tray carrying the prize tea set of the family... most of which had been smashed to smithereens! Ma, then just a young girl herself, took what remained of the tray from the maid's hands and asked her to run away... confronting her questioning mother with a fait accompli... as though she herself had been responsible for the damage!

– Her protection of 'Brij'... her young student, who, due to her mental instability, was renounced by her family... having nowhere else to go, she knew she could come to Ma! And of course, how Ma took her in, got her treated for her mental illness and reinstated her in a job in the University... is a well-known story.

– A story oft told to us by Chhote Ma also corroborates the above:

It was late in the evening, when Ma and Chhote Ma were returning to Chandigarh after a tour. Being a winter evening, it had become dark. Suddenly, at the side of the road, they saw an elderly couple whose car had evidently stalled. As was Ma's habit, she immediately stopped. Chhote Ma reminded her that night had fallen, and it could prove dangerous to offer help at that time. However, she knew her words were not going to stop Ma! The couple told Ma that the fuel had finished in their car... they needed to get some fuel urgently. Since Ma often travelled on work, she

used to keep a Jerry can with petrol to counter such eventualities. She promptly emptied the can of its 20 litres of petrol and ensured that the elderly couple were on their way! When they offered money, she refused to take it and told



them to hurry home since it was getting dark! The Sikh gentleman, before getting into his car, thanked Ma profusely and said to her... “I know of no one else who would stop at this unearthly hour for an old couple and do unknown strangers such a favour. There is just one other person who bore a similar sense of compassion... one Ms. Pushpa Anand... a Director of physical education in the Punjab University!” It was at the tip of Chhote Ma’s tongue to say “This IS Ms. Pushpa Anand...!” but Ma stopped her with a little stub of the foot!

Such was the protective umbrella that we all experienced when in the shade of Her infinite love, compassion and grace!

Although there was enough evidence that Ma’s concept of ‘family’ had such broad horizons that it encompassed this entirety, her relationship with her immediate family was ever firm in her heart and she was always there in their time of need.

Learnings from my interactions with Pitaji

During those early and mid seventies, I cherish the memories of the opportunity of my growing interaction with Pitaji, Mr. Chunni Lal Anand... Ma’s Father.

As recounted earlier, Pitaji would come to Madhuban every Sunday for the late morning *Satsang*. As a scholar of Spiritual literature, including the Vedas and the Srimadbhagavad Gita and Upanishads, he stood incredibly tall. It is no wonder therefore, that the content of Ma’s elucidations to his queries was immensely deep and profound. No wonder that he acknowledged his own daughter as ‘Ma’ in public... even though he retained his privilege to call her ‘*kaaki*’ in private!

My personal interactions with Pitaji began during the early 70s in Dalhousie. His love for ‘Urvashi’... Ma’s Word, had grown through his regular visits to Madhuban during the last 5 years. He thirsted to hear Urvashi... and expressed his desire to Ma. We had, since, procured Vashisht House, primarily to be available to Pitaji and Biji in case of any requirement or illness. When Pitaji voiced his desire, Ma told me to walk across to Anand Bhavan every afternoon to read the ‘*Pragya Pratibha*’ (a collection of Ma’s meditations, printed by Arpana’s publications) to Pitaji. I do not know what Pitaji gained from these readings... but I know that I personally gained immensely from his thought processes that branched out upon hearing Ma’s Word. How deeply his thought processes probed the essence of the topics that Ma had meditated



on... He often used to reminisce about Ma's childhood at Anand Bhavan and he also very courageously lamented that he had not understood the Spirit of Ma's Being in

those early days! He admitted that he was always intimidated with the prospect of debating with her on any topic of consequence, because each time, she would surely emerge victorious! He emphatically elaborated on the immense good fortune of those of us who lived with Ma and had the opportunity to witness her exceptional qualities and interactions on a day to day basis!

Pitaji's understanding of Ma was based on his knowledge and appreciation of our ancient Scriptural texts such as the Gita, the Vedas and the Vedanta... therefore all that he said, possessed both essence and depth. He was constantly comparing Ma's attributes with those described in the Upanishads and other Scriptural texts. Truly those two months or so which I spent with him every afternoon, were inspirational for me. I was too ignorant maybe to appreciate the relationship between father and daughter in its fullness... but I was truly blessed to appreciate it even at the periphery.

Ma's relationship with Pitaji, Biji and her family

As time went on, Pitaji's health began to deteriorate. Both he and Biji knew they were in their last phase of this worldly existence. Whereas Pitaji had the strength of Scriptural knowledge to hold his imagination, Biji was firmly rooted in the good deeds that she had performed throughout her life. Comes to mind that incident when a vegetable vendor who had come to Vashisht house and received new clothes and lunch in Ma's kitchen... as he left with tears of gratitude in his eyes, he recalled "There used to be another kind lady who lived in Anand Bhavan many years ago... whenever I sold vegetables there, she would never send me away without giving me new clothes and food to eat!" He was remembering Biji's love!

Biji had a quaint relationship with her daughter. On the one hand, she would call her 'Pushp raja'! On the other hand Biji would reproach her daughter for her behaviour that did not conform to normal standards! ...and sometimes she would lovingly think upon her as 'natkhat Gopal' abiding in her heart! Ma's pranks with Biji dated back to Ma's childhood. Biji, being a very busy social worker, apart from bringing up her 8 children... and their 2-3 cousins as well (Ma used to say, they were a complete cricket team!) was always rushed for time.



Consequentially, she would keep a diary, where she would note down an appointment for whosoever of her children required her time. One day Ma (a child of 12) looked into the Mandir to see Biji sitting there performing *havan*... she patiently waited and then told Biji she wanted to talk to her... as usual, Biji told her... "Come to me tomorrow at 12. I will keep this time for you in my diary!" The next day at 12, she waited for her daughter... who never appeared! She called for her daughter, "You had asked for time... yet you did not come!" Ma looked at her mother mischievously, "I had a stomach ache yesterday Biji... today I am fine... so no need to waste your time!" Similarly, watching Biji perform *havan* daily, Ma smilingly asked her the virtue of performing this *havan yagya* every day! Biji replied... "The *saamagri* put in the flames purifies the whole atmosphere!" Ma, the little child then solemnly remarked "In that case Biji, we should put a whole lot of *saamagri* in the steam engines of the trains as they move all over India... and make all of India pure!" No wonder that Biji could not quite understand her daughter!

Now that the end was approaching, Ma had stationed herself in Delhi, to be of some service to her revered mother. Biji was, in those days, staying with Dr. AK Anand and Mrs. Ela Anand... her son and daughter in law, who had a house in Vasant Vihar. Knowing that Biji did not require to see her physically, Ma would sit in her car outside the house at Vasant Vihar, and deep spiritual discussions would commence with whosoever was accompanying her. She had told her brother that she was right there and available always in case of any requirement for medicine... or for that matter, any requirement at all! This went on for days... During the last few

days, Biji began to constantly refer to Ma and say “my Gopal is in my heart!” So did she pass into the beyond... under Ma’s watchful gaze and in the company of her dear ones.

After Biji’s demise, Pitaji too began to lose his strength and stamina. His health was surely on the decline... but not his inner spirit. It was soaring. His son, Dr. AK Anand, had by then started a Nursing Home ‘Dr. Anand’s Nursing Home’ in Jangpura, South Delhi. Pitaji, due to his many physical ailments, came to stay with his son. His instruction was that Ma must be close by, so that he could call her whenever he wished! His ever caring daughter was naturally right there always for her father. *Yo... yatha maam prapadyante!*

The next few weeks we were to witness a sublime sequence of events and flow of divine knowledge that behoved one who was already steeped in Vedic lore. Every morning, after a quick breakfast, Ma would go to be with Pitaji, who, after his night’s sleep, was ready to quiz his daughter about doubts on life that he had not yet figured out. Having been with Ma for about 2 hours, and having quenched his ever growing thirst for the Truth, he would close his eyes and signal for her to go... he was now tired! She too would quietly exit... only to be with him again at 4 pm! Having rested, he too was ready to pursue his quest. This continual flow of questions, answers, and Pitaji’s requests that Ma should pray on his behalf, has been compiled into a precious treatise on life and death... called “Mrityu se amrit ki or”



It is a ready reference for every seeker who wishes to reflect on the mystery of life and death.

The day Pitaji passed away, and the rest of the children surrounded him with tears, Ma said to them...“Do not allow Pitaji’s beauty to be washed away in your tears... reflect on his amazing qualities and make them a part of your being!” Not a single tear flowed from the eyes of the daughter to whom Pitaji had more or less offered his soul in his last moments. The song of Urvashi flowed forth almost continuously as the body was lifted by his sons and they walked to the cremation grounds... following Ma who sang for her father all the way... as a loving tribute to what he was and for his afterlife.

Let it suffice to say that it was a privilege indeed to be witness to the entire process of Pitaji’s body being consigned to flames, the collection of the ‘flowers’... and the commemoration of the qualities of the respected ‘loved one’ in a continual prayerful offering... and then immersing the ashes into the holy Ganga in an equally soulful tribute. Even as I recount those moments, I shiver with the amazing vibrations I experienced during those amazing days.



When Ma had decided to change the direction of her life on that momentous day... 9th March, 1957, her entire lifestyle changed also. Her family was dismayed at this apparent change in their daughter/sister! They voiced their strong reservations and made equally emphatic counter suggestions that she must reconsider her decision and return to a so-called ‘normal’ way of living! When Ma left for Rishikesh on 2nd September 1962, some of the brothers had even stated unequivocally that she was making a huge mistake and should not rely on them in case of any mis eventuality! Ma’s only reply to them was a smile of compassion. She understood their concern, and loved them all the same!

In later years, it was she who stood by them in their time of need... whenever they were ill, or caught up in difficult situations, or alone in their lives, it was she who was always there... no wonder that in those difficult times, the only support they sought was hers! Many of them spent the last months of their lives with her standing by... ever loving... ever the umbrella shielding them from the heat of life.

...to be continued

*Dr. Indar Sagar Gupta –
A Legacy of silent nobility*



A TRIBUTE BY ABHA BHANDARI

...That loving smile of joy on his lips
...That welcoming twinkle in his eyes
...That fond reminiscing of past times
...And always those blessings that emanated from him...
...That tender kiss of welcome on my hand by dear Indar Uncle
... Indeed, my visit to C 38 Friends Colony New Delhi, shall never feel the same as before!

I feel blessed to have received the fond love of dearest Raj Aunty and Indar Uncle as a daughter receives from her parents. Their warmth and generosity of heart embraces me always... each and every time I enter their warm home... theirs is a love that seeks nothing in return... which is magnanimous in its very essence... just as they are.



The word 'was' cannot apply to Indar Uncle... for, the vibrancy of his presence lives on forever... and ever. And the vibrancy of his presence sprang from his innate nobility... his consideration for one and all. It is no wonder then that he excelled in all that he did. As a doctor he was compassionate and reassuring. An eminent ENT surgeon, he was held in the highest esteem by the entire medical fraternity.

I remember an occasion when a doctor examined Param Pujya Ma and told us that She probably had throat cancer! I could not return home with this terrible declaration resounding in my heart... and we decided to go straight to Indar Uncle... that too without appointment! He received Ma with reverence and love and examined Ma thoroughly and immediately



reassured us that it was NOT cancer... She merely had a nodule on the vocal cords! So emphatic and definite was his diagnosis that it completely eliminated the tension within! I have always felt indebted to him for pulling us out of that terrible situation!

I also feel privileged to share a birthday with him... which basically ensured that I received his blessings on our special day! He would always loudly proclaim “Abha the great... how lovely to see you!” I would of course cringe at the definition ‘great’ but relaxed when I realized that indeed, he used this adjective for all his children and grandchildren! It was therefore merely a display of his affection. My special day will never feel special again without his blessings!



Just as he lovingly tended to the plants at his farm and in his garden, so also he silently nurtured each of his children and grandchildren with the finest humane values... no wonder that their family is exceptional... each one has inherited from him the art of giving of themselves, of generosity, of love, and nobility... what greater gift could he have given to this world?

In his later years, even when he was confined to the wheelchair, his spirit of giving and his bonhomie were irrefutable. I remember the day when I went to visit him at Friends Colony and was told that he had just returned after buying over 100 ice creams from the local Mother Dairy booth and distributing them to all the underprivileged children and guards and indeed, whosoever was visible to him as he was being



wheeled around in the park! So effortless and spontaneous was his spirit of magnanimity that he even risked a scolding from his caring son for having exposed his lungs to Delhi's winters!

Maybe his greatest legacy to his family was his silent, yet solid nurturing of all that was good and humane and beautiful in life. Arpana's continual handicrafts sales at his house for the past over 15 years, had his full support and blessings... no wonder then that the Rural women who benefit from these sales, continually shower their gratitude and thanksgiving to his family for their philanthropy.

I have no doubt, that no matter where the Lord takes him, he will again lend the security of his constancy, of his love and his giving.



Au revoir dearest Indar Uncle... maybe I will soon be fortunate enough to share a birthday with you again! God willing! ❖





Param Pujya Ma

Arpana

Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,
Karnal, Haryana, India
December 2021

Arpana Ashram Events

Urvashi Day

'Urvashi', a spontaneous flow of Divine knowledge elucidating the essence of the Scriptures, flowed forth from Param Pujya Ma on 2nd October 1958 and continued to flow until Her Mahasamadhi in 2008. This beautiful flow enlightens each recipient and enables their journey towards Sat Chit Anand – Truth-Consciousness-Bliss. As a divine resource for all, Urvashi is comprised of Ma's elucidations of the Bhagavad Gita, the Principal Upanishads, and several other Spiritual texts. It answers myriad questions and contains a fount of purifying intense devotional prayers.



Urvashi Day at Samadhi Sthal

Arpana Hospital Day



Dr. Ela Anand, FRCOG (London) 1997, one of the founder members, applauds Arpana Hospital for serving patients from over 500 villages

On 2nd October, Arpana members, doctors and staff celebrated the 41st Anniversary of Arpana Hospital, which was established to provide affordable modern medical care to rural patients.

Arpana Hospital is now a multi-speciality Institute with qualified doctors and excellent facilities. Due to compassionate donors, **no patient is turned away due to inability to pay!**

Delhi Programmes

Arpana Students Bring Light into their Mothers' Lives!

Arpana Trust, under the guidance of Dr. Mridula Seth, Professor and Consultant to the UN, initiated an Adult Literacy Program for the mothers of children who are enrolled in Arpana Education Centre.

The students were motivated to spread the light of knowledge in the lives of their mothers who are illiterate and are eager to come out of this darkness.

This program, specially designed by Lady Irwin College, Delhi, started with 13 mothers, using a methodology which enables the learner to get a grip on basic reading skills in 3 months with the books provided.



The children guide their mothers to read the chapters with the help of the audio recordings sent on WhatsApp. The women come to the Centre twice a week with their work and discuss their progress with the class teacher.

Arpana is very grateful for education support from Essel Foundation, New Delhi, Caring Hand for Children, USA, and Arpana Canada

Arpana Hospital

Laser Surgery comes to Arpana

Dr. Ramesh Agarwal, DNB, FMAS, MNAMS, performed a laser surgery on Sumit, a 23 year old resident of village Kutail, who was suffering from pilonidal sinus-A. This surgery was pain free, without any cut, wound or scar.



Plastic Surgery

Himani, 6 years old, lives in village Kambopura, Karnal. In an accident while playing, her tongue was nearly bitten off. Dr. Agarwal performed plastic surgery on Himani's lacerated tongue. After a week the little girl was able to eat her food normally.

Deep gratitude is extended to the Baij Nath Bhandari Public Charitable Trust for sponsoring medical care for poor patients.

Rural Empowerment

The Differently Abled – Building Their Own Skills and Businesses



PWDs with Sahayaks participate in group activity to formulate simple business plans for food preservation businesses

20 differently abled persons participated in food preservation courses conducted by the Kalpana Chawla Skill Center in Karnal. Arpana conducted a gathering so they could look into livelihoods options. There were lively discussions and several emerged with practical ideas for self-employment, i.e. dairy, pickles, sauces and fast food. Five of these differently abled persons came to Arpana's workshop to give their plans a practical shape.

Mr. Ish Bhatnagar and Mrs. Aruna Dayal informed them in detail how a business can be set up and what resources are required.

Celebrating Lives of the Differently abled!

On 26th November, a *Mela* (fair) was held at Arpana's Centre in village Budhakhera, celebrating the lives of members of Arpana's Differently abled Persons Organizations (DPOs).

Differently-abled persons enthusiastically participated in activities like:

- ◆ Kabaddi one-on-one contests
- ◆ Races with 3-tiered *matkas* (clay pots) filled with water
- ◆ Painting competitions
- ◆ Mehendi decorations
- ◆ Rangoli depictions
- ◆ Bead threading contest
- ◆ A Stage Play depicting the true story of one of the members.



The Deputy CMO congratulated the Federation of DPOs for organizing this gathering and commended all members for their efforts in transforming their lives. He made clear that the differently-abled are as valuable as anyone, mentioning that gold medals in the Para-Olympics were on a par with our Government with those won in the regular Olympics.

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

Arpana Ashram

Research

Publications & CDs

Arpana endeavours to share its treasure of inspiration – the life, words and precept of *Pujya Ma*, through the publication of books and cassettes.

Publications			
गीता	Rs.300	Bhagavad Gita	Rs.450
कठोपनिषद् हिन्दी	Rs.120	Kathopanishad	Rs.120
श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्	Rs. 400	Ish Upanishad	Rs.70
केनोपनिषद्	Rs.36	Prayer	Rs.25
माण्डूक्योपनिषद्	Rs.25	Love	Rs.20
ईशावास्योपनिषद्	Rs.20	Words of the Spirit	Rs.12
प्रश्नोपनिषद्	Rs.50	Notes	Rs.10
गंगा	Rs.40	Bhajan CDs	
प्रज्ञा प्रतिभा	Rs.30	ईशावास्योपनिषद्	Rs.2000
ज्ञान विज्ञान विवेक	Rs.60	(a deluxe 8 CD set)	
मृत्यु से अमृत की ओर	Rs.36	स्वरांजलि (vol.1&2)	Rs.175each
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भजनावली	Rs.80	उर्वशी भजन	Rs.175
वैदिक विवाह	Rs.24	हे राम तुझे मैं कहती हूँ	Rs.75
गायत्री महामन्त्र	Rs.20	गंगा (vol.1&2)	Rs.75each
नाम	Rs.15	राम आवाहन	Rs.75
अमृत कण	Rs.12	तुमसे प्रीत लगी हे श्याम	Rs.75
Let's Play		हे श्याम तूने बंसी बजा	Rs.75
the Game of Love	Rs. 400	Bhajan Pen Drives	Rs. 500

Arpana Pushpanjali

Hindi/English Quarterly Magazine

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Kindly add Rs. 25 to books priced below Rs. 100 & Rs. 40 to books above Rs. 100 as postal charges.

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Contact for Questions, Suggestions and Donations:

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