

Of what Use is Knowledge to Me?

Of what use is knowledge to me
If my mind is not bathed in Thy hues?
If my music does not declare Thy name,
How can I sing songs of You?

If even with tears I cannot see Thee,
Of what avail this burning heart?
Why should I even adorn my world
If from Thee I must thus part?

How can intellectual explanations satiate
This yearning and stricken mind?
My eyes are dimmed with ignorance now,
What solace in the world will they find?

Utterly devoid of conviction and faith,
Can I today even await Thee?
If I cannot satisfy my mind
How can I desire my deity?

My mind is potent with devious traits:
Where can I hide Thy name Lord?
O Merciful One! shower Thy Grace
Tell me what to do Lord!

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

गर मन न रंगा तेरे नाम से

गर मन न रंगा तेरे नाम से, तेरे ज्ञान को पाकर क्या करूँ।
सुर में रंग तेरा नाहिं भरा, तेरे गीत भी गाकर क्या करूँ॥

रो रो कर तू न मिले, तो दिल को जला कर क्या करूँ।
हृदय में गर तू नाहिं बसे, जहान सजा कर क्या करूँ॥

मन ही न माने यदि मेरा, बुद्धि को बढ़ा कर क्या करूँ।
राम आवृत्त अखियाँ मेरी, जहान दिखा कर क्या करूँ॥

श्रद्धा नहीं विश्वास नहीं, तेरी आस लगाकर क्या करूँ।
मन निरुद्ध न कर पाऊँ, तेरी चाह बढ़ा कर क्या करूँ॥

मन कपट से भर रहा, वहाँ नाम को लाकर क्या करूँ।
करुणा पूर्ण तुम कृपा करो, कहो राम राम मैं क्या करूँ॥

Prayer

Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts.

~ Mother Teresa

If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough.

~ Meister Eckhart

The aspirant never needs to seek anything from the world, not even happiness. He is completely satiated with the Presence of His Master.

~ Param Pujya Ma



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Note: Views represented in this journal reflect the understanding of individual contributors. Most articles are based on 'Satsangs' given by Param Pujya Ma in answer to seekers' questions.

Published by Mr. Harishwar Dayal for Arpana Trust, Madhuban, Karnal, Haryana in March 2022

Love Letters to Her Lord...

~ A Blueprint of the Aspirant's Path

In continuation of the 2nd Reading of the Srimad Bhagavadgita by
Param Puja Ma, the path to That Supreme Goal is further defined

ABHA BHANDARI



Param Puja Ma addresses her mind... and indeed the mind of each sadhak who is persevering on the path towards living in the Real. She sometimes cajoles and at other time scolds the mind... then again, she persuades the mind through enthusiastic camaraderie... showing it the treasures of the Spirit that are still to be gained!

In this segment of the 2nd Chapter, where Lord Krishna defines the state of the Sthit Pragya, or one who ever abides in the state of Supreme Meditation, Ma urges her mind to pay heed to the Lord's Word...

“Do not be so foolish! Perceive how those Rishis and sages of yore, redeemed themselves from the bonds of birth and death, and attained the Highest State. You also must renounce attachment through the Yoga of Intellect. Progress towards That Ram... He is your aim! The Real and unreal are both before you. Now that you can discern, why are you still proceeding towards the unreal? You have also come to know the complete insincerity of the unreal. You now know its transient nature. When will you get cured of this Shav rog... this attachment with the inert body? It is difficult to understand. Stop getting amused by these ‘toys’... they will all leave you. Or else you will have to brush them off from the fabric of your conscious self. Even if you attain heaven, you will have to return after partaking of heavenly enjoyments... then again... this cycle of birth and death!”

Chapter 2

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

One endowed with the intellect of equanimity transcends sin and virtue in this very world. Therefore strive to attain Yoga. Yoga ensures skill in action.

Shloka 50

Earlier, the fruits of both sin and virtue have been discussed. Now it is said, transcend both. You say that duty has to be discharged... so this Yoga is your foremost duty. Discharge it. The most important *karma* is to equip yourself with the Yoga of the Intellect.

You are distressed that you are being separated from the world! Poor beggar that you are, you still love the world! Compare yourself to those sages of yore, who did not bother about this material world... they used to take their *kamandal* (water pot) in their hand and walk away. No laments... no attachments! You will inevitably part from the one you are attached to... whereas those sages were attached to That Eternal, Everlasting, Blissful One. They say here, why cry for that which will disappear? Transcend all this and attain That Supreme One... That Ram. *Sadhana* is also a *karma*. The attainment of the Yoga of Intellect is also a *karma*... If you have to perform *karmas*, then endeavour to attain That One... that would be the greatest action!

At first they defined the Yoga of Intellect, then they developed your interest in this Yoga... then they entice you by saying that any gain on this path is eternal and cannot be destroyed. Then they tell you of the immense need to attain this yoga. They also say that one who is not worthy or deserving cannot attain this yoga. Arjuna too was like we are. The Lord says “Take recourse to this Yoga of Intellect. Endeavour to remain immersed in it... Everything is included in the attainment of this Yoga. Do you know... from the material point of view also,



society, family, home, wealth, recognition, fame are inherent in this Yoga. In organizations such as that of Ramakrishna Paramhans, Raman Maharishi etc. there are huge ‘repasts’ being organized... food is being shared with all on a huge scale. But what is the value of these things? The attainment of the Atma Essence is the greatest duty of a human being. Which duty did Chaitanya Mahaprabhu not attend to? What did Raman Maharishi not do? They attained That One to whom all belongs!



Did you hear? They say that sin and virtue... **both** are to be renounced. These are merely comparative wrongs... Keeping your eyes on your goal and the Truth of death before you, now decide what you want. They say, taking recourse to the Yoga of the Intellect, sitting in this ship of Yoga, you will be able to encounter the storms of duality... the onslaughts of both joy and sorrow... and you will be able to steer your ship ashore. The scriptures bear witness every moment to this Truth.

Lord Krishna Himself is calling you to Him. The Lord says... ‘This is the best state to be in – this is your highest duty!’ All other duties are incidental to this one.

People say... ‘he is a doctor... he is constantly sitting in meditation... when someone calls him, he should attend immediately! How will his practice progress this way?’ Do you know... all these suggestions and remarks are for the establishment of the body self... whereas we are trying to surrender to Him! This is sin. The very fact that one is born is due to sin. If one has to transcend this, one must sit at the feet of the Lord. Do not be disturbed. Try to be cleansed of attachment and repulsion... transcend duality. Indifference towards the world ultimately leads you to Him. Keep your mind focused on Him every moment.

(It may be clarified here, that Pujya Ma is referring to ‘Indifference’ here in the context of a *sadhak*, who is endeavouring to focus his mind which is overtly entangled in the world, upon That One. She has never advocated the relinquishment of duty or *karma*. Practicing such indifference is a phase in the journey of the *sadhak* towards his goal.)

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१॥

Speaking of the attainment of Yoga through the intellect, the Lord says, ‘You too, should do the same!’

Endowed with the intellect of equanimity, and renouncing the fruits of action, the man of wisdom attains freedom from the bondage of birth and death and achieves perfection.

Shloka 51

I have embarked on this path, accompanied by the desire of wealth, recognition, family wellbeing etc.!

Do not be so foolish! Perceive how those *Rishis* and sages of yore, redeemed themselves from the bonds of birth and death, and attained the Highest State. You also must renounce attachment through the Yoga of Intellect. Progress towards That Ram... He is your aim! The Real and unreal are both before you. Now that you can discern, why are you still proceeding towards the unreal? You have also come to know the complete insincerity of the unreal. You now know its transient nature. When will you get cured

of this Shav rog... this attachment with the inert body? It is difficult to understand. Stop getting amused by these 'toys'... they will all leave you. Or else you will have to brush them off from the fabric of your conscious self. Even if you attain heaven, you will have to return after partaking of heavenly enjoyments... then again... this cycle of birth and death.



O Ram! When will You instill this Yoga of Intellect in my heart? *Sanyas*, or inner renunciation eliminates *sanskaras* or latencies of the intellect. To attain this state of *sanyas* is the highest *karma*.

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२॥

When the intellect is freed from the quagmire of moha, you will transcend all that you have heard as well as all that should be heard.

Shloka 52

“When your intellect is freed from the quagmire of moha...” Yes... Did you hear? *Moha* is a quagmire. You will be sucked in by it as much as you continue to partake of it... and if you transcend it, you will be free of all the bondages of attachment! You will attain complete *Vairagya*. Then you will not be troubled by this inert body, nor its relationships... neither by fame nor defame. You will not be interested in any of these. You will not mind their thoughts words or deeds... let alone mind, you will not be affected by them. When no desire, craving or any utility remains to be gained from the world, then why would anything they say affect you? The first step in the quagmire of *moha* is ego... next is this body self... and the third is the material objects and this world. Until you remain in their clutches, you are not worthy or deserving of the state of *Samadhi*. You asked why



you were not deserving... this is the Lord's reply! Without this, you cannot aspire for the Intellect purified by a strict adherence to yogic procedures. This is the **only means** to purify oneself of *sanskaras* or latencies of the past... the past latencies should be quelled and no more latencies must be created. Then even all memory of this world shall be obliterated!

Sometimes you say 'I am performing my duties' and at other times you claim to engage in social service! Why are you destroying yourself thus... so

entangled in the meshes of this world? Rise above these attachments even now. Your wellbeing lies in this transcendence.

Neither will anything remain worthy of being heard, nor will you be troubled by anything you have heard. All that one hears from others... the atmosphere created by those words, lingers in one's memory and becomes part of our intellect. Time and again, it rises to create turmoil within and disturb us. You must 'wander' only in pastures of attachment with your Supreme Goal... avoid all other arenas or else there will be a persistent commotion in your mind. Who knows which memory arises at what time to disturb you... to cause frustration within you... to distance you from your Lord. How can such a mind ever hope to abide in *Samadhi*?

The Lord says, 'Abide in solitude'. When you meet people, impressions, ideas and complaints throng your mind. These leave memories which disturb you at the time of meditation. The mind cannot remain still then... it is confused by the conglomeration of what the scriptures say, what the latencies say, and what people say. How can such a mind and intellect abide in peace? So, a constant practice of staying away from the world and people will help. And look! When these no longer bother you, consider that you have transcended them!

Will I ever experience such a state? O Lord bestow Thy Grace!

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥५३॥

Once your intellect, confused by the innumerable doctrines it hears, becomes steady in samadhi or transcendental meditation, then you will have attained the Yoga of equanimity.

Shloka 53

This intellect is constantly propelled by the scriptures, by the wise teachings of Great Souls, or by the dictates of this world... desire for sense objects is misleading the mind always... you even go to the temple to seek material gain! O foolish one! Become like a rock! Do not be swayed by all that you hear, as a dry twig is blown away in the face of a storm! **Allow it to blow away your false sense of pride instead.** When this storm of external ‘Shruti’ can no longer move you, when your intellect can no longer get disturbed by it, only then will your intellect become stable. This is *buddhi yoga*, or Yoga of the Intellect. Only then will this stable Intellect (Vivek) be able to attain Yoga. The Lord is warning Arjuna, “Do not relinquish this Yoga of knowledge... take the help of Yoga of the Intellect, so that new *sanskaras* or latencies do not take hold of you.”

Don’t you see... this Yoga of Knowledge... or Yoga of the Intellect quashes all latencies.

अर्जुन उवाच
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥५४॥

Hearing about the *Atmavaan*, the stable intellect and the state of constant, unbroken *samadhi* leading to Yoga, Arjuna wanted to know more about the qualities of the *Sthit Pragya* or the one with a steady intellect. He asks:

O Keshava! What are the characteristics of the Sthit Pragya? How does a person of steady wisdom speak, sit, walk and behave?

Shloka 54

O Krishna! What are the characteristics of a *Sthit Pragya* (one with stable intellect)? They seem to look the same as I do... with the same body and physical appearance. How shall I discern their ‘adornments’, and the special armaments they use to fight with their own minds? Their battle concluded, they have now won. But how did they win? What strategy did they use to



conquer their mind?
You must describe
their qualities to me,
only then can I make
them my goal! How
shall I fight this war
against duality? How
can I conquer my
t h o u g h t s ,
justifications and
moha? O Ram! Only
You can tell me. I
too, like Arjuna, am
standing in
wonderment and
gazing at these
wondrous souls!

With Thy
unsurpassed Grace,
I have been brought

to this spiritual 'garden'. You have extricated me from the forest of my mind and brought me here.

You have brought me across the Ganga to this realm where the *Sthit Pragya* souls abide. You have brought me here to give me a chance to visit this *loka* (realm) so that I may decide my path. I have been witness to this world through many births and even in the entire period of this birth. Now at last, You have brought me to this 'abode' beside the pure Ganga, where eternal spring remains, which is permeated with a sweet fragrance, where the cool breeze brings to me the song of the Vedas, where there is complete voidance of the pain of birth and death! Here, neither the body, nor the mind, nor the dagger of the intellect causes any disturbances.

By making me witness to this abode... are You not trying to tell me again and again "Make up your mind! On one side lies this transient, momentary world, replete with desires entangled in the quagmire of *moha*... fear of death and sorrow and anger and attachment... and on the other side lies abidance in the *Atma* Essence." Yet, why can I, the lost soul, not understand? O Ram! Pray, You decide for me. Do not give me the choice... Oh please God!

...to be continued

What is Idol Worship?

TRANSLATED FROM PARAM PUJYA MA'S
ORIGINAL ELUCIDATION IN THE
PRAGYA PRATIBHA
BY ARUNA DAYAL



Those true devotees who have never worshipped mere stone, whose ardent gaze has never beheld an inanimate deity are condemned by us as indulging in idol worship! Lest we persist in such unjust accusations, let us first inquire into the meaning of idolatry. Let us find what an idol is and who it is who worships such clay images in reality.

An exploration

Let us look at ourselves in a different perspective. Our bodies are made of clay: they are automated puppets and no more. Yet how proud we are of them! How inordinately vain we are of knowledge acquired by us!

Yet if we are truly endowed with wisdom, why have we not realized the torrent of life flowing towards inevitable death? Why are we unaware of the reason for our existence? Why do not we know the mode and course of our interaction in the world?

It is our *sanskaras* that rising out of the void of time, have assumed the inward aspect of our nature. This body is the result of the causal factor of past impressions. Out of these seeds has grown our inward self and its various desires, intents and motives. Out of this fusion of cause and effect is born the body; its external deeds are prompted by the *sanskaras* buried within.

We the Idolators!

Our nature, molded and shaped by past impressions, expresses itself in predetermined external deeds. It is to this clay puppet, animated by buried

seeds of the past, that we are wholly attached! We believe we are this body-mind-intellect unit. Our devotion, our love and our worship is directed towards this heap of dust! This is the idol we worship day and night! And yet we profess to condemn idolatry! Wholly identified with this stone, insensitive to all save self, we profess to abjure from idol worship! Are we not wholly committed to this idol? Yet we condemn those simple hearted love-intoxicated devotees as idolators. They have transcended the body self and having made their first obeisance to their Lord, they ceased all the egoistic rites of worship offered to the body self. They have risen above matter and are ascending towards the Divine.

Their Love makes Him manifest

Consider these *bhakts*: their yearning gaze has never perceived a stone image. From the very first, their exclusive devotion to the Lord caused Him to appear before them. No *bhakt* has ever prayed to insentient stone... he has never bowed before a clay image. His intensely loving prayers beg for a glimpse of his Divine Beloved and the Lord cannot stay away from His humble suppliant. It is not to a stone but to the living Lord that he prostrates himself in prayer!

Their Guru is Ram

An ordinary *sadhak* has to struggle constantly to overcome his compulsively selfish mind and blind intellect. They impede his *sadhana*. The *bhakt* however has placed both mind and intellect at his Lord's feet. He is no longer bound by them: he pays no heed to his mind nor needs to chastise it.

It is said that intense exclusive yearning for the Truth will unite the seeker to the sage. Such a *bhakt* the Guru himself comes to raise, to lead, to guide. Let us then envy them that pure devotion that grants them the blessing of the Lord's own live appearances. Let us glory in and rejoice at the *bhakti* which causes Ram Himself to descend as their Guru and guide!

The *Guru*, the *Atma* and the *Paramatma* are one: the external Truth, the indivisible whole are One. What words can praise the *bhakt* whose devotion invokes that Supreme Lord's actual Presence: who has surrendered his all, having once made his obeisance to his Master? Such a devotee has given up the vain might of the personalized intellect and is wholly engrossed in his Divine Beloved. His Master now descends as a flow of divinely intuitional thought and guides him from within.

Blest by the divinely alluring vision of his Lord, the devotee loses all taste for external, material enjoyments. Having tasted the nectar of Divine Love, he turns his adoring gaze inward, to feast on his Beloved, enshrined within! Dwelling in the realm of the Spirit, his entire being is absorbed in the Self.

In the instant of surrender he achieves that truth which a *sadhak* struggles to realize life after life! And we have the temerity to give such a devotee the label of idolator! It is our dull gaze that beholds an insentient stone image: he has only seen his Beloved, his Lord!

The Transcendental Tryst

He has cast off the concept of 'I am the body': he is ever seated at his Lord's feet. He has renounced his mind, body, intellect and egoity and has taken shelter in the Supreme. He has cast off this limiting, mortal apparel. In fact the Lord, in His utter Grace, has robbed His devotee of these garments that so bound him.



A Living Presence

The fact is that no '*bhakt*' has ever seen a clay figure, a stone sculpture. We condemn him as an idolator when he knows not what an idol is! It is we who venerate our body made of earth... and it is we who call the true *bhakta* an idol worshipper! He who has utterly forgotten his own self, who has not ever glanced towards his body! He is purified of all egotism and his sense of doership is non-existent. His *Guru* is Ram alone. How can one try and fathom such a one whose constant companion is the Lord Himself, whose Protector is Ram?

It is such a *bhakt* who perpetually abides in the Truth, that we accuse of reveling in untruth, condemn him as dwelling falsely in the unreal, when he is wholly fixed in the only reality! Let us accept now that he has never bowed to a stone deity – his gaze is ever illumined by the radiant vision of his Beloved.

The Material matters not

As for us, we are fixated on the body self, whether our own or that of our *Guru*. The *bhakt* however is led on by the *Guru* within who speaks to him in a flow of intuitive wisdom. Having transcended the gross universe, the devotee calls his Lord to lead him on and refuses to leave his Master's feet. He casts not even a glance toward the material world; he makes no claim on it and even if a devotional plea rises within, he places it humbly at the altar of his Sovereign.

A sublime State

Shraddha and *bhakti* are the handmaidens of such a *bhakt*. The Lord Himself reveals to him the very subtlest essence of knowledge. He however has no desire for *gyan*. His intellect is surrendered to his Lord and yet he is a fount of wisdom, for within him is enshrined the Supreme Lord of all! The glorious Presence of the Master irradiates his being and he can only sing his Beloved's praises. Every instant a fresh flower of love, a tender bud of devotion blossoms and is lovingly offered at his Lord's feet.

Pure Prayer

Gradually this consciousness of offering prayers fades away: every vestige of a personal personality melts away and each word is *Pragya* manifest. Moreover having uttered his prayer, it is placed pure and untouched, at the shrine of his most precious Lord. The fragrance of these devotional blooms is ever fresh for he never breathes in their perfume. His nature disallows him to make any offering tainted by a 'sense of doership'.

Incessantly he rejoices afresh in his Beloved's Glory: each passing moment is resonant with his songs of praise. The very intensity of his devotion transforms each thought into the music of Divine Love.

Having renounced the gross world, he moves ever towards his external, spiritual abode and absorbed in Ram, all thought is a flow of *Pragya*. His visions of the Lord have resulted in total self forgetfulness.

We call such a divine *bhakt* an idolator! Why he remembers nothing of the world, he is united ever with his own Lord! We talk of his abidance in duality; he does not profess to understand these words, yet in fact, he abides in absolute oneness with the Supreme.

He is wholly absorbed in *Samadhi* yet he never ceases to say Ram... Ram... It is his very nature to live in the Name. He is established in *Advait*, yet he never speaks of it. For the truth is that he who is one with the Absolute, cannot talk of it: each word that flies to the portals of the Supreme, wings back in the perfect beatitude of Silence.

The *bhakt* is thus lost in his Beloved and the *gyani* is lost in his *Samadhi*. There is no essential difference between the two. The differences are imposed by language by us. Thus, we can see how a true devotee sees nought but his living Lord. His glance has never touched any object, his eyes ever behold only the glorious image of his Beloved.

In this perspective can we talk of any idolatry? The devotee has imbued his Lord's image with the pure intensity of his devotion, with the poignant yearning of his Spirit. His prayers, his love manifests his Beloved before his very eyes, and he can see nothing else! His vision is blessed indeed, for no stone does he ever see! The living Lord is for him the only Reality. ❖

Living with Revered Ma, the Ultimate Friend, whose compassion and caring are unbounded, one sees that in Her life giving is as natural and normal as breathing. In Her presence, giving material goods seems so little compared to the joy one receives from the happiness of the other and the consequent joy that fills one's own heart.

Attempting to convey this to an acquaintance, I asked, 'But when you give a coat to another and see his happiness, isn't the joy you feel much greater than having the possession for yourself?' He looked at me as if I was out of touch with reality. 'That is the viewpoint of a saint or one who is "holier-than-thou"' he returned, 'not ordinary people who are honest about their motives!'

But for me, this was self evident, for I had seen the evidence in Revered Ma's life. She has given me the opportunity to see for myself the beauty of giving in my own life whereas, before meeting Her, it was incomprehensible in my practical life!

I feel incomparably fortunate to be able to live with Such a One whose life illuminates the way to make a heaven of one's life... I offer this little story at Her Feet in the hope that the glimpse it conveys of the spirit of giving will enter our hearts and bring forth flowers of joy and love for all around us.

The Coat

ANNE ROBINSON

Andrew gasped as his breathing became more difficult. The doctor, one of his old friends, applied the oxygen mask and gradually, his breathing became more even. He felt a surge of gratitude for the love and care that surrounded him during what he knew were his last days.

His head relaxed on the pillow and he saw his old coat hanging in the open closet. What a flood of memories it brought to him! He had received it, new and fashionable, upon graduation from college and, wearing it, had applied for the job he was to hold for the rest of his life.

His thoughts drifted back to the time when his friends had finally persuaded him to buy a new coat, 15 years later... His old coat, they insisted, was as outdated as the last century. It was true, Andrew decided, his old coat was



indeed old and a bit threadbare. Yes, the expense was justified – it was good to have a new coat!

He watched the snowflakes drift down as he stood carrying a bright plastic bag with the new coat, waiting for the bus home. He did not know why he did not wear the new coat, but was reluctant to treat the expensive purchase casually. A smile settled on his lips as he decided to wear the coat that afternoon when he went riding with his friends in the new park in an open horse carriage! They were all getting a bit old for a freezing cold ride in an open carriage and yet it was the craziness of it that appealed.

Middle age, he thought, and what do I have to show for it? An office job which I feel lucky to keep, but not much chance of advancement. Caring for my old mother as well as for my two nieces who were orphaned as babies when their parents met with a car accident. Melissa and Darby were like daughters to him now and had grown into lovely young ladies, caring and helpful. How lucky I am, he thought, to have the love I receive from my family and to have such a wonderful group of old and loyal friends. None of the group were rich or successful in worldly terms, but the riches of love, friendship, laughter and support were what Andrew found worth living for.

With a blare of horn the bus rounded the corner and he ran to board it, slipping thankfully into an empty seat. Then he saw his seatmate was struggling to close the window which had opened a crack, pouring the icy breath of winter onto the occupants. He added his strength to these efforts and the latch was quickly secured.

‘I have been trying to close that window for 6 blocks,’ explained the man seated next to him. ‘Thanks for helping.’ He was an older man, who was wearing an old sweater insufficient to keep out the cold, but otherwise neatly dressed. His face had an unhealthy pallor and his thin shoes would not keep out the snow and slush on the city pavements. Andrew hesitated then spoke, ‘But you cannot get warm, for you are not wearing your coat.’

The old man’s eyes flickered briefly as he turned to look out the window. ‘I have no coat,’ he said simply. His face settled into the grim lines of a lifetime of adversity, and his body was unable to restrain a tremour of shivering.



The bright plastic bag in Andrew's lap grew heavy and he looked at the thick wool garment he had saved so long to buy. His arms moved automatically as he put the plastic bag into the other's lap. 'You have a coat now,' he said. The old man, bewildered and thankful, was unable to believe his good fortune. Then anxiety crossed his face. 'But how will I repay you?'

'Do the same for someone else when you can,' Andrew called out as he got off the bus. 'Life is for loving each other. Pass it on!'

A wrenching pain brought Andrew back to the present. Even through the strong medication he had been given, the pain seemed unbearable and his face involuntarily grimaced.

Pain! he thought, how all encompassing while it was felt and how insignificant when it had passed! While in pain, a person would do anything for relief. He had often thought that this was the reason for the evil in the world: people were literally trying anything and everything to dull the pain they felt in living lives bereft of the joy and fulfillment of love and self respect. Like the arrogant street tough who had turned up at his house one day...

They had just celebrated his 56th birthday with a special dinner when the doorbell rang. A young man pushed in the door as soon as it was opened and slouched in. 'I need a place to stay for the night,' he announced, casually seating himself in a large easy chair, playing with the heavy brass knobbed belt he held in his hands. 'Don't call anyone, or you'll be sorry!'

Andrew studied the uninvited guest. Very young, he decided, despite his hulking size; probably still in high school. Instinctively his heart went out to the newcomer: surely if someone could help him now, his whole life might be changed.

Yet a warning bell sounded in his head as he remembered his mother lying sick in the upstairs bedroom and recalled that Darby and Melissa were also home. If he made a mistake, would the young man hurt his beloved family? He hesitated a second and then realized that this could have been his son – if he had ever married. 'I have to do what I can,' he thought.

'Welcome, friend,' he said, we have just finished dinner, but there is plenty more for you if you would like.' 'Friend!' laughed the other, 'you really are a wimp! Why, I can do anything I like to you and you can't even save yourself.' 'But the question is not what I can do or cannot do, friend,' Andrew answered calmly, 'the question is why are you roaming the streets at night in this quiet neighbourhood? Do you live around here?'

'Wouldn't you like to know!' mocked the large tough, as he rose and drew his head closer to the older man with a menacing leer. 'I was kicked out of my house,' he shouted defensively. 'It was my stepmother! She

hates me. Get a job, she says, you don't need to finish school – you're failing anyway!' The boy clenched his fists, 'She just wants me to move out of the house.'

'I have a friend,' Andrew mentioned casually, 'who could put you up for a while. He might even have one or two other boys staying with him – he's always ready to help out.' 'A social worker!' the boy exclaimed, jumping up. 'You are trying to fob me off onto the System where nobody cares and they throw you into a locked room and try to decide how the 'juvenile delinquent' can be rehabilitated!' An ugly expression crossed his face.

'Bob is my old schoolfriend,' Andrew replied, unruffled. 'Yes, he does work in the caring profession of counselling young people, but he does far more. He makes a home for boys who don't have a place to go – for a day or for a year! And he has always been lots of fun...' Andrew reached for the phone. 'I'll just see if he's home.'

The young boy sat still, a flicker of hope crossing his face and Andrew gave a sigh of relief. The battle was over, although the war was still to be won. Andrew gave a little prayer of gratitude that he had given in to the impulse to try to save this child, and a longer prayer of gratitude that the boy's heart was still open and had not been hardened by a lifetime of rejection, failure and disappointment.

When Bob came for the boy, Andrew remembered how on an impulse, he had given him the new coat he had just received from his daughters for his birthday. The boy had straightened up when he had put it on him and later, he remembered, had proudly worn it when he graduated from high school. The boy had made it.

Andrew had had to make do with the old coat which was still in his closet. It's strange, he thought, but I never feel cold in that coat, although it is really threadbare...

A beloved voice sounded in the hallway and then he saw Darby hurrying towards him. 'Papa,' she cried, throwing her arms around him, 'Oh, it's so good to see you!' Andrew's eyes filled with tears as he kissed her precious face. He had not known whether he would ever see her again. She lived in Australia now, where she had gone to study. There she had married a wonderful man and was now expecting her first child.



‘Are you all right?’ he whispered, ‘and the child?’ ‘Oh, Papa,’ she laughed through her tears, ‘it is your health we are worried about!’ ‘The doctor says you are getting better. We’re going to have you up and about in no time!’

‘Dabby,’ he said softly, using his childhood nickname for her, ‘we need to accept what is happening and I need you to be strong for me. I know this body is finished and I wonder what else there is when it goes. What do you think, is there anything on the other side of death?’

The face of his daughter took on a beautiful maturity as she looked at him with love flowing from her heart. ‘You have shown us all your life that the spirit is stronger and vastly more important than the body,’ she replied. ‘Your values have fashioned a heaven for all those who have come within your orbit. Modern physicists say that even a speck of matter can only be transformed, but never destroyed. Then think how much more eternal the spirit must be, for it is infinitely greater than matter!’

Her words seemed to infuse a glow into Andrew’s face, and a peace far beyond anything she had ever seen rested in his eyes.

Then his eyes flickered briefly as he looked beyond her and she saw he was looking at the open closet which contained the old coat. He struggled to speak and she bent close to the cherished face.

‘Mr. Felipe on the ground floor,’ he whispered, ‘has just lost his job. He needs a good coat for job hunting.’

‘You want to give him your old coat?’ Darby asked.

‘No, no,’ he said anxiously, ‘he has to have a first rate one. The one you sent me from Australia is beautiful – just what he needs. And that old coat,’ he looked at the worn garment which had served him so well, ‘will be just right for this old body when it is buried.’ Darby couldn’t keep the tears from flowing down her face. ‘Promise me, Darby,’ he said anxiously, ‘promise.’

Darby looked at the face of the only father she had ever known – and the most beautiful human being she had met. Even on his deathbed, she thought, he is thinking of others and not bothering about himself... even as life ebbs, he is proving the values he lived by. Truly the Spirit is far greater than matter.

Her face softened and she whispered, ‘I promise.’ ❖



Your Grace fills my Life to Overflowing

Part 6

ABHA BHANDARI

In continuation...

The Ashram 'grows' in the Mother's love



As time went on, members of the Ashram increased. Some came from sheer need created by circumstance... some for the love of Ma... and some used this period as a stepping stone... to move on when they so chose. Ma embraced all... irrespective of their intent or need. All stayed in complete freedom... with just one guiding instruction "Pray together... Work together... Eat together!" There was a time when we were 80 Ashramites... all with diverse backgrounds, religions, and social and economic status! Amazingly, hardly any had come to seek the Essence that Ma was... yet, unfailingly, they all received what they sought!

Having the extreme privilege of watching Ma at very close quarters, since I was staying in the same room as her, I was privy to her amazing



attitude towards all... There were no restrictions of time to approach Ma. Being the fulcrum of a large heterogeneous family, there were demands on Ma's time and wisdom 24 hours! Whenever there was an argument or quarrel, the reconciler was Ma... whenever there was any material requirement... the *kaamdhenu* was Ma! Whenever clouds of loneliness or sadness loomed, there was Ma! Often, I used to wake in the middle of the night and notice that Ma was not in her bed... and more often than not, she would walk in holding the hand of someone who obviously had felt the need for her! Her

wireless antenna was always in the receiving mode!

And yet, nothing could contain the 'fun side' of Ma! How we loved to be woken up by her in the middle of the night, with her infectious smile lighting up her face... "Let's have a midnight party!" A simple sharing of coca cola and chips or peanuts with Ma and many of the 'family'... snuggled in her love, and regaling each other with jokes and songs sung together was a magical remedy for all the 'blues' we may be experiencing at that time! Little known to us, those very times were also a time for spiritual growth... for, we were being given the elixir of spiritual living... a healthy syrup of love, sharing, belonging, and standing by always not only for our spiritual family... but for all. Indeed.. Ma taught not merely through words, but led through precept!

Unforgettable too, are those times when Ma would say to us "Come along... let's go to Karnal for a movie!" We would pile into the Ambassador car... the only one we had at that time... and off we would go! But those were also times when Ma would teach us that everything in life would not

necessarily go our way.... and that we should remain equally ready to accept negative situations as we embraced happy ones! So often, when we were all packed in the car like sardines, Ma would suddenly say, “Abha, you step out... and let someone else go... you come next time!” Undeniably, there would be disappointment... but somewhere, there would always be



that excitement of waiting for that ‘next time’ when one could be with Beloved Ma! Such was her magical aura. Ma would subject us often to this ‘technique’ of accepting sudden change... When a group was selected to accompany her to Dalhousie, and all preparations were complete... and all the fortunate ones travelling with Ma would be in the car, She could say at the last minute... “Someone else needs me more right now...” and someone who was all packed and ready, would be substituted by that person! This was invariable! Ma so often taught us this art of acceptance... even at the risk of facing our immense disappointment/reproach/even tears!

In fact, every day with Ma was a day of learning that nothing was constant. Several activities had built up at Arpana since the 10 years that Ma had first stepped into Madhuban. Most of Arpana’s activities were fashioned around the talents/interests/needs of the residents who had come to make Arpana their home, and activities that were of service to the rural communities

that surrounded Arpana. Despite the fact that most of us had not come for spiritual progression primarily, but just to be with a Spiritual Mother ensured such advancement. To engage in acts of service for others through using each one's different talents and qualifications was a natural outcome of life with Ma. Each one took up one or the other activity... Satsangs, Publications,



Agriculture, Dairy, Construction, Management of home and kitchen, Administration, Handicrafts... these and many other responsibilities were taken up by each member of the Ashram. However, it was the Mother's responsibility to ensure that her children progressed spiritually... therefore, the responsibilities that they shouldered were changed constantly... thus attachments were kept in abeyance! Maybe this curb on attachment was also the reason for Ma to change the residential rooms of Ashramites time and again! These were the little lessons that Ma taught on a daily basis... lessons that seemed irksome at that time... but Ma was willing to bear the consequences!

The winds of destiny blow in the direction where they can fashion the intended change. So also, it was at Madhuban. We were steadily growing from a core group of about 15-20 people... and now it was time for the service activities to begin. Therefore the Lord had to bring the right people. Dr. Mehta (Papaji), through his very presence, attracted a steady stream



of patients requiring a doctor's attention. They were surely fortunate to have got the most wonderful and most highly acclaimed doctor of Jullunder at their very doorstep!

Biji was his extremely competent helper and would dispense medicines to the patients. At Ma's behest, Dad had procured an aluminium shed to serve as a 'dispensary'... and also medicines that could be given free to the



patients. But as the need grew, and in order to make the service activity more wholesome and complete, funds had to be found to fund an ambulance for seriously ill patients to be taken to the civil hospital at Karnal. Also, the need was being felt to have a small in-patient facility with a nurse for patients who required overnight care. At that very time, Mr. RM Sabharwal, affectionately known as 'Ratti Uncle', earlier a Director of Burmah Shell and more recently, a Director of ACC, who had also been associated with Ma in the mid and late 60s, was transferred from Bombay to Delhi. He came not only with intent to involve himself with Arpana but also with the strength of his Corporate background and contacts, and most of all, his intense will to be in the service of Ma, his Spiritual Guru.

Mr. Sabharwal's arrival added an immediate impetus to Arpana's services. An ambulance was arranged through funds donated by Christian Aid, and the little seedling of Arpana's services was infused with new life. Ma's watchful eye and her constant and daily directions ensured that the services flowed in the right direction... to serve the poorest of the poor, in a spirit of selflessness.



At that very time, a seeming thunderbolt fell on Arpana. The Government issued a notice saying that the land upon which Arpana stood, was to be acquired by the Government for the expansion of the Haryana Armed Police complex. Our immediate reaction to this proposition was... "we will fight for our land... how can it be taken away from us!" Ma's next words silenced us immediately... "The Police Complex belongs to the Nation. If our land can be of some use to the Nation, we must offer it readily... we will be able to find an alternative accommodation soon!" When the intent is sincere, and when faith in the Divine exists in all its fullness, the Lord definitely intervenes. In a matter of a few days, a large house was identified on the outskirts of Karnal, and it was set up immediately. I was an onlooker... an amazed onlooker at Ma's complete detachment towards all that had been built up with painstaking effort over the last 18 years. However, gauging from Ma's conversations with different Ashram members over the next few weeks, she was clear... it was the Lord who had given and built all, and it was the Lord who now demanded that all be returned to Him! Ma's decision was spontaneous... all was given by Him... and must be returned to Him at His bidding! Kunjpura house was retained by Arpana for about 3 years, till the impending 'acquirement' was not laid to rest.

This was the time provided by the Lord for the residents of Karnal to gain access to Ma! Many would gather for the Sunday *Satsangs* that had now shifted to Kunjpura house. This was also the time for Nirmal (Anand) Aunty, (Ma's elder sister) who ran the Social Workers' Home in Karnal, to learn more about Ma. She too began to visit Kunjpura house more often. During one of her visits, Ma made a request... "Behenji, you make such beautiful hand embroidered linen and sell it for the benefit of needy ladies... please help us to start a business that will support Arpana!" Nirmal Aunty smiled and readily agreed. "Send Abha to me every day for 4 hours... and I will teach her how to craft baby frocks!" Since Social Workers' Home was



not more than 2.5 kms away, I began to cycle there every day, for my daily education in the manufacture of baby dresses! I was indeed grateful for this new opportunity Ma had given me to learn the rudiments of starting a 'business' afresh... even more so, since it would yield some money for my family at Arpana... and some money to lay at Ma's feet. My 'lessons' continued for about 6 months, after which Vishnu Behenji took over the new foundling 'business'... still under Nirmal Aunty's vigilant eye. It is this 'little' business started then at Social Workers' Home which yields enough money today to run the countless village homes of ladies engaged in hand embroidery, stitching and finishing of the finest home linen, baby things and ladies' nightwear. It was Ma's urgent appeal, and Nirmal Aunty's sincere and painstaking efforts which have yielded this harvest of wellbeing in rural homes today. Thus began the Handicrafts activity of Arpana.

Dr. Anand Kumar Anand, Ma's younger brother who was a surgeon, and his wife Dr. Ela Anand, a gyneacologist, ran their Nursing Home in Jangpura, South Delhi. Both being highly acclaimed doctors and both with extremely high standards of medical practice, never compromised on their professional standards in running their Nursing Home, therefore, inevitably, they accrued financial problems...

Dr. AK Anand's understanding of Ma, had grown by leaps and bounds during the prolonged illness and subsequent passing away of their parents. He had come to love Urvashi... the flow of spiritual knowledge... most of it in sublime verse... through his subsequent sessions with Chhote Ma. He



was a man of many talents. Not only was he an excellent surgeon, but also possessed of a beautiful, melodious voice, and gifted with a green thumb! One can safely say that the credit of putting Urvashi to music primarily goes to him. He and Chhote Ma would select several pieces of soulful and enlightening verse from Urvashi... then he would tune it and sing it... It almost felt like the Lord had selected and brought together this TRIAD Himself... Ma, who was the Fount of Divinity and from Whose lips divinity flowed forth as Urvashi, Chhote Ma who captured Urvashi as it flowed through her incomparable ability to inscribe the words even as they were being sung... and Dr. AK Anand who then put those incredible verses to music!

His wife, Dr. Ela Anand, besides being an excellent gyneacologist, also loved Urvashi and spent many subsequent years in diving into its very depths through translation of the many manuscripts that had been captured in writing by Chhote Ma. She was also a very loving supporter of her husband's talents, and whilst he was singing, she would provide accompaniment on the tabla... she mastered this craft just to be by his side and be his strength. She herself was an accomplished singer of western classical music.

When both Drs. AK and Ela Anand, and Ratti Uncle decided to make Arpana their home, the initiation of Arpana Hospital was almost a natural outcome. Funds were collected painstakingly by Ratti uncle's assiduous and unremitting endeavours...



However, perhaps the entire burden of responsibility was on Ma's shoulders... and she bore that responsibility with love, with strength and in a spirit of offering herself to her Divine Lord. Every facet of the hospital... its plans, its construction, the procurement of its equipment, land, surroundings, people to be employed... each detail would be placed before her for advice.



And she did not withhold herself at any point. Night and day, day and night, she was available to all. I remember that I would get tired and tell her at 10 pm... "Ma, you should rest... please sleep" but she was ready for another meeting which would last sometimes till

midnight... only to be ready for the next one at 6 am! Relentless love... a relentless vigil and relentless giving...

The village services too took wing simultaneously. Both health and wealth of our rural brethren were viewed carefully to enable nurturing them with care. The first few times our ambulance went into the villages, we were almost pushed away by the villagers who viewed our doctors and workers with suspicion! It was only with repeated confidence building measures

that they understood and believed that we were there to be of service to them! And Ma was always there... guiding... hearing the experiences we encountered and counselling on a daily basis. Her protective hand, shielding the flame of service newly lit, embraced a large gamut of activity. Often she would ask to be driven out into the villages. On one such visit, she pointed out to a distant small village... called Gamri (small hamlet)... and wherever she pointed, one could be sure that there was a crying need! Gamri was in a piteous state where sewage and lanes were both running into each other! Ma instructed that we



begin to work immediately to construct lanes and drains in that village... from that village, began a long chain of villages that needed the same treatment! In providing these lanes and drains, many health problems were automatically eradicated! Such was the blessing of Ma.

Ever so often, she would stop to converse with the patients coming to the hospital, enquiring after their welfare... ensuring they were happy and were being looked after... so much so, that during those early years, the patients would often tell their attendants... “You can go home now... I am



in good hands and as though with my own family!” Ma thus set a standard to measure the efficacy of the hospital.

How Ma would identify with these humble rural folk was a lesson by itself. They would feel that she was one of them and that they could offload

the entire load of their thoughts upon her and she would find a solution! Thus, often, ladies from the village divulged their innermost pain... “Our husbands hold all the money of the household... and waste it on liquor in the evenings... we barely get enough to feed our family... let alone affording milk for our children, or their schooling! We need money in our hands!”



Ma and Chhote Ma with staff from the Handicrafts Dept

That was the time when Ma decided that the handicrafts activity that was so far providing support to the Arpana family, would now be expanded to nurture the families of the rural women. A partnership

was formed and the activity was formalized as a service activity to be undertaken by the Arpana family.

Ma was truly the key to every solution... the remedy to every problem... the one person ‘army’ each one felt they could go to in order to gain respite from their predicament. “Let us go to Ma!” was the constant refrain. Not just to find a solution to a dilemma... but often to use her as a buffer... the cushion where someone did not wish to deal with any particular person!

She would listen to each one, guide each one... and also severely reprimand whosoever required it! Thus, as the family grew and the activities grew, people began to view her less as the beautiful ‘fun’ person she was... but more as a disciplinarian. Discipline was important indeed... often she was told “Why don’t you make rules for the family and for the organization?” But our Divine Mother never made any rules... her reply was, “Our rules are all enunciated in the Gita... those rules must be followed... but cannot be enforced!” Maybe it is due to this, that till this day, Arpana remains without any rules... except those inscribed in those people’s hearts, who acknowledge and uphold That Divine Mother as their Guru and their all.

...to be continued

I paint only what I wish to see...



RASHMI ANAND
FROM THE COMPILATION 'AS I WALK'

People in my life I see
They are all I want them to be,
A canvas I paint in my mind
Their character within which I bind.

I know not truth or reality
I paint only what I wish to see,
To touch up every characteristic I'm free
And mostly I paint a reflection of me.



My weaknesses, strengths, my own emotions
The traits I wish not to see in me
In others find reflection,
I stamp onto others, so judgementally.

I think I have the right to view all with my limited sight
I judge, I sit on judgement, I blame
And think not twice
Before darkening another's name.



Have I realised that my collage
Is nothing but a critically hued mirage,
That others are what they may be
But that I only see what I wish to see.

Moha - Misplaced Emotions

REPRINTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY MRS. SHEILA KAPUR

Moha is an infinite unconscious fondness or attachment beyond reason or calculation. It is a blind tie-up totally based on Primal Ignorance and is propelled gravitationally and illogically to oneself. It implies primarily a fondness for the self and not for the next of kin or beyond as usually imagined. It generates a clouded vision that screens off factual truths and reality from oneself. Thus fundamental enveilments of attractions and repulsions follow that give rise to irrational behaviour patterns and biased thought currents.

Basically *moha* only seeks self glorification and satisfaction of self pride, being least bothered about the well being of the other at any level of existence. It is a blinding factor perfectly geared to a myopic vision of the factual reality of life, the illusion being perpetuated by blind faith on one's own righteous conduct. This eclipsing sentiment leads to automatic wreckage and ruination of plain justice between what you call your own and differentiated as not your own. One conceals the lacunae and drawbacks of the one and exposes, rather highlights, those of the other indiscriminately. Truthfulness is thus given a complete go by. In other words, he is thus intellectually defunct or sterile. His measuring rod is neither the scriptural sayings nor the example of any solid or steadfast Godman, enunciating and practising the principles of righteous Thought and Living. His own body self identification have riveted themselves firmly to the Primal Error that leads him on to a delusive self assessment.

Moha is the devil that prejudices and pollutes the entire internal hemisphere. It shuts off from view the high heritage of the *Atma*. This has resulted in the present day mental deterioration and depredation of *Kaliyuga* – the darkest age of sin and atrocity, of broken homes, family disruptions and lack of domestic amity and peace.



Positive emotions on the other hand speak of selfless love... love that goes out of its way to pick up the other... love that nourishes and nurtures the other even at one's own cost. Here you find there are no self seeking influences that cut across, cancel out, deter, intervene and interfere in giving total attention to the other's requirement to the exclusion of all other considerations. This excludes even the thought whether the other deserves it or not. These extraordinary beings, personifying Benevolence, Humanity, Forgiveness and Love become totally alien to their own personalities and self advantage or otherwise. On the contrary, their total concentration and energy goes in building up the other. Naturally they become a pillar of strength for the other. This expands further to encompass an ever widening circle... one does not even stop to think where the family ends! Indeed, the whole world is the Creator's family, and He being our Father, it becomes our family, too.

Process of Evolution

Ego is the seed that ignites and then unifies itself into a three-in-one state. It becomes tri-coloured as it embraces the body-mind-intellect unit in its aura. The one immersed in this Trinity becomes oblivious to all the rest that is happening around.

With the personality cult leading, the body relations follow as secondary off shoots of 'me'. 'I' the self worshipper gets infatuated with the self created self-image and starts extolling it in every way deservedly or undeservedly. Soon a bosom friendship is developed, with its off shoots branching off in outer directions. But all said and done, it is merely a co-existence between strange bed fellows, both being an equal part of the same illusory panorama created by the ego. Out of this union of 'me' and 'mine', a third would appear as a product of that *Moha* or adhesion. This in its natural flow of vanity immediately grabs all the credit as its own wonderful doing.

In fact, those were only the blessings showered by the Almighty and subsequently doled out by Destiny to him. This turns into a perpetual self revolving vicious circle. Through sheer repetition of this endless internal play, the inter relations between 'me' and 'mine' tend to become firmer and confirmed. This adhesive power is called *Maya*.

The Unwinding Process

When no second person figures in this programme, one has merely to reverse the previous one and post mortem in retrospect thus:

(a) The body comprising of mere dust is not my own creation nor did I have a hand in it, but strangely enough this mind carries its own insignia of a personality stamp and self praise wherever it goes.

(b) One also earmarks personalities that fit in one's specifications of affinities and taste; one gets closer to them and rejects those falling in the opposite group.

(c) All those are just immature opinions born out of Ignorance about actual facts. Unable to assess ourselves or others with better and authoritative measuring rods reveals a paucity of intelligence. We bank only on our limited and biased experiences in life that can lead us astray more often than not. Our sweeping awards of unjustified condemnation or undue placation of unmerited adoration are often not based on factual truths. People become adverse, relationships turn sour and snap when you least expect them to. If we use our wits, maybe a change in our circumstances could become a possible constraint on our behaviour patterns.



The Basic Error

(1) The ego-ridden alone can demand and expect from others. Not the one who gets detached from self importance.

(2) An objective observer has a free intellect to penetrate a situation dispassionately and truly assess it.

(3) Interpretations usually superimpose a non-factual coloring to any person or circumstance. The mind adds its own hues and renders it impossible to take things on their face value.

In conclusion, if life is viewed factually without prejudice, only Love will flow through the eyes. The utmost beneficiaries to draw on that Reservoir would be the immediate family circle. Let not requisites creep in as the spirit of competition and jealousy, which would pollute the internal hemisphere. Even when faced with opposition and antagonistic situations, one will not lose one's cool and flee, nor retreat. This speaks of love for the Truth that is impersonal. Irrespective of who the recipient is and overriding all repercussions on the self, one just does what one ought to do. It is a life of total self forgetfulness which follows transcending the body-self idea. The personal factor and self considerations do not intervene or debar. Thus, we see how True Love and mere emotional infatuation are directly opposed, one to the other. Where there is self desire, there Love cannot exist.

When one is unburdened of false attachments, one feels lighter as if a great weight has been off-loaded. Truly all connections with the Unreal can only tie oneself down to dust and wean one away from the Transcendental Effulgence that can radiate a Blissful existence alone.



To remember non-attachment
is to remember what freedom is all about.
If we get attached, even to a beautiful state of being,
we are caught and ultimately we will suffer.
We work to observe anything that comes our way,
experience it while it is here, and be able to let go of it.

~ Sharon Salzberg





Param Puja Ma

Arpana

Newsletter

ARPANA TRUST, Madhuban,
Karnal, Haryana, India
March 2022

Arpana Ashram

Celebrating Christmas

A family Christmas, celebrated in the Arpana Mandir, brought warmth, love and cheer to all. Beloved Ma's answers about the love of Jesus enlightened our queries.



A video about Amos, the Blind Boy, brought back sweet memories from faraway years, along with the everlasting message of Love's Miracles. All joined in enthusiastically to sing the age old Christmas carols that are loved around the world. And our very own Santa brought wonder and happiness to the little ones!



Zoom Meetings

Ma's ordinary, yet extraordinary, answers to questions from family, friends and seekers are available on video, 7am and 7pm on Arpana's Zoom meetings. Not only is knowledge revealed, but one has the opportunity of opening oneself to our glorious birthright of Sat-chit-anand and to find joy in the awareness of the Truth.

Arpana Hospital

Oxygen Plant Installed in Arpana Hospital

An Oxygen Plant, donated by Sewa International Organization, was inaugurated at Arpana Hospital, Madhuban, Karnal, by Cricketer Sumit Narwal on 18th Jan. 2022.

The Oxygen Plant, with a capacity of 150 litres per minute, is dedicated to the common people in their fight against Corona. Mr. Narwal said that no person battling Corona should lose his life due to lack of oxygen.

Now Arpana Hospital can pipe oxygen to the ICU, Covid Ward, etc.



Haryana

Arpana's 'Covid Vaccine Shield' in 100 Villages!



Arpana enabled the Government vaccination effort to achieve 94% vaccine coverage for the 1st dose and 77% for the 2nd dose in 100 targeted Haryana villages!

Arpana trained 80 self-help group women volunteers to conduct home visits, counsel

apprehensive villagers about the vaccine and accompany village folk to the government vaccine camps.

152,044 doses of the Covid vaccine were given from Aug. to Dec. 2021.

Our deep gratitude for IDRF and Friends of Kalpana & Jaydav Desai (USA), the Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission, Dame Mary & Arpana Guernsey!

Self Help Group Women Learn of New App for the Vulnerable

Ms. Tavleen, Chief Minister's Good Governance Associate, addressed 50 women leaders of Arpana's self-help groups to introduce a new app to be launched by the Social Welfare Department, Haryana, for women and the elderly who are dependent on others for various day to day activities.

The app consists of 2 sections:

- 1) Services – like filing applications, paying bills, etc. and
- 2) Grievances – a portal through which one can report abuse, violence or injustice. Anonymity is ensured for the one reporting.



Arpana's Education Programs in Delhi

Arpana Education Centre in Molar Bund

A Workshop on Creative Writing, conducted by Ms. Madhulika Agarwal, was held at Arpana on 2nd December for all Arpana primary teachers.

Ms. Madhulika has been awarded with the Hindi Academy's 'Bal Evam Kishore Sahitya Samman' in 2007 and the Children's Book Trust Award in 2020. Her stories have been published in collections by NCERT, Macmillan and AWIC. She has also written 5 other books and has 2 decades of experience in publishing.



Ms. Madhulika explained various techniques to enhance the imagination of children and also showed how creative writing plays a key role in expressing ourselves. She has involved Jasmine of Arpana Trust, class 4B, in her workshop and included Jasmine's first story in a book she is publishing.

Jasmine, author!

Arpana's deepest gratitude for support from Essel Foundation, New Delhi, Aviva plc, UK, Caring Hand for Children, USA & Arpana Canada

Gyan Arambh at Vasant Vihar

Our vision and mission is to narrow the learning gaps between disadvantaged and advantaged children. The prolonged closure of schools due to Covid-19 pandemic has hampered the mental and physical health of children besides hindering learning.

Arpana devised a '**Bridge Curriculum**' to better connect with students:



- **Teachers prepare solutions** for difficulties students are having with their school worksheets.

- **Educational videos and audio tapes** for students on varied topics of national and international importance.

- **Information on scholarship opportunities** to students of class IX.

- **Giving appreciation to the best students of the month** for online work.
- **Talk To Me (TTM)** is a voluntary initiative aimed at improving the conversational English skills and confidence of young people.

Himachal Pradesh

Irrigation for Greater Financial Security

Eight irrigation systems consisting of a water tank and piping to the fields are a source of greater financial security for 121 families in 8 isolated hamlets of Jatkari Panchayat in Chamba District, Himachal.

Earlier, only half an acre of land was planted with vegetables for domestic purposes – no income was earned. With irrigation secured, vegetables were planted on 16.5 acres of land, earning the villagers Rs. 1,653,655!

In addition, over 67,700 trees were planted on village common land.



Planting Apple and walnut saplings



Dola Ram

Dola Ram belongs to a farmers' self-help group in Dadar village of the poverty-stricken Jatkari area. With a loan of Rs.20,000 from his group, he set up a small flour mill which runs on water power.

Villagers get their corn and wheat ground here and Dola Ram earns approx. Rs.5000 a month.

Arpana is deeply grateful to Tides Foundation, USA, BN Bhandari Public Charitable Trust (New Delhi), Arpana Guernsey and the Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission for support in Himachal

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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.

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