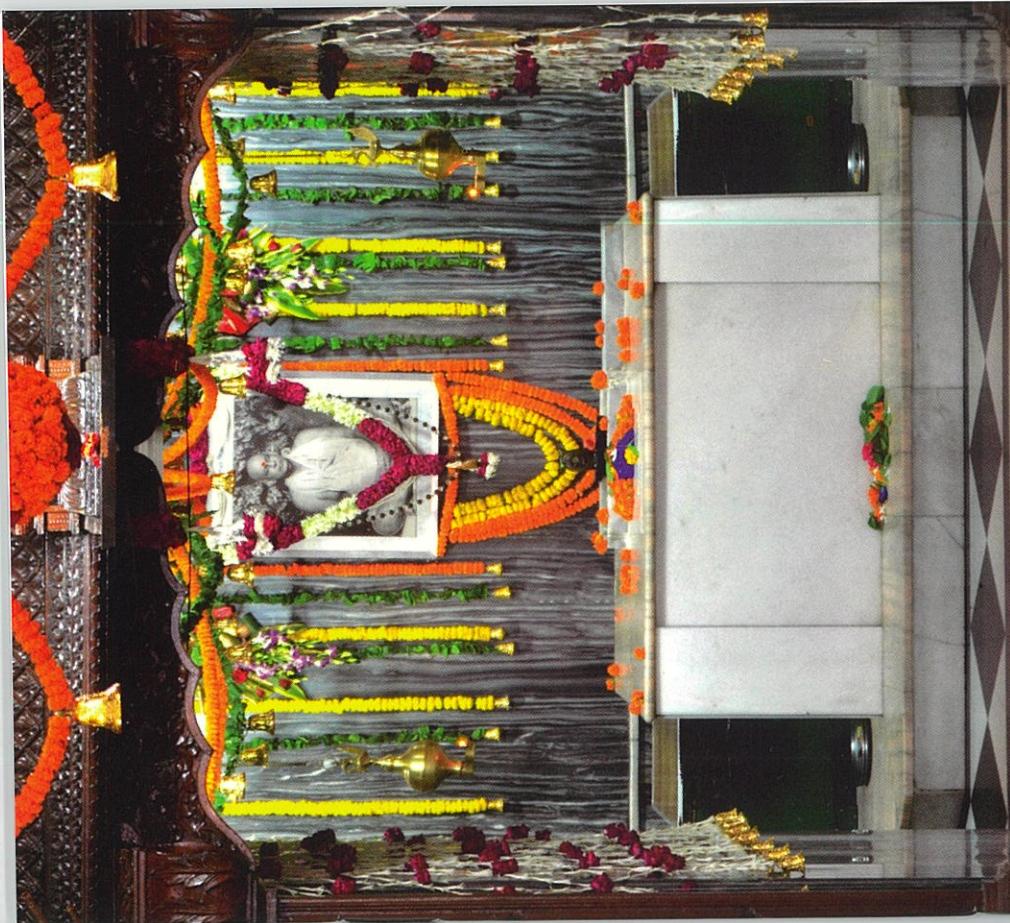


Twenty-Five Pearls of Jnanopadesa

Swami Sivananda



**TWENTY-FIVE PEARLS
OF JNANOPADESA
OF
GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDA**



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FOREWORD

This booklet contains 25 excerpts from the various writings of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. It is hoped that these select passages will provide a useful reading material for daily Svadhyaya to everyone who endeavours to lead a disciplined spiritual life.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Shivanandanagar
6th August 1988

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1. WHAT IS THIS WORLD?

This is a strange world indeed. This is a very big museum or wonderful show. The flowers and the Himalayan scenery, the Niagara Falls, the sea, the sky, are all beautiful and charming. But the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, lightnings, thunder-storms, land-slips, cyclones and epidemics of influenza and plague are awful and threatening.

This mysterious world with its charming scenery is very beautiful to look at but it is very dirty to mingle with. All are deceived by its Mayaic charm. But the sage, the devotee, the Yogi and the Viveki are not affected. This very big world is a mere drop or an atom when compared with the Infinite Brahman. Just as a straw is floating in the ocean, so also this world is floating in a corner of Brahman. The mind and the senses are deceiving you. They reveal to you an exaggerated picture, just as the microphone exaggerates the sound of a pin-drop into a mighty thunder. This is Mayaic jugglery, which is understood by people who possess dispassion and discrimination, but not by the worldly people.

The glory of the worldly life passes away quickly. Name and fame are vibrations in the ether. Where are the mighty potentates who once wielded their sceptres with such pomp and glory? No one speaks of them now.

2. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Behind the names and forms, there is the universal life or hidden Brahman or immanent God. Try to feel the reality underneath the forms. Scorn not the tiny creatures or the undeveloped beings. The same life that throbs or pulsates in you is throbbing in ants, dogs, elephants and all creatures. Realise your identity and intimate relationship with all creatures. There is only a difference in degree in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman.

What is common in sun, moon, stars, chain, walls, stones, animals, birds and human beings? Existence. A table exists. A tree exists. Existence is the Sat aspect of Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman.

There is only an apparent, fictitious difference in bodies and minds. There are differences in colours and opinions. Atman is the same in all. A thief, a prostitute, a scavenger, a king, a rogue, a saint, a dog, a cat and a rat—all have the same common Atman. Ignore the false appearance and difference. Take out the essence of reality. From such practice you will derive inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop cosmic love and unity of consciousness. This will be the rare magnanimous experience. This will eventually result in the Vedantic realisation of Oneness, Advaita.

3. THE HIGHER MIND

If your mind is free from cravings, desires and attachment, you will not be born again. You will attain freedom and perfection. If disciplined, stilled and purified, mind is your useful servant, but if left unbridled and undisciplined, it brings misery and sorrow.

If you allow your lower mind to be pampered with earthly things, then true Jnana (wisdom) will recede to a great distance from you. A stainless mind without attractions, though engaged in worldly acts, will never be bound thereby. A mind with attractions, though engaged in innumerable Tapas, will ever be in bondage. Man is the creature of thought. Whatever he thinks, that he becomes. As the mind itself, which thinks, feels and wills, is a modification of ignorance. It cannot know Brahman or the Absolute.

Have a well-directed mind, which confers very great benefits. Make straight the mind. Restrain the mind. A subjugated mind is conducive to happiness. The regular practice of Japa with Bhava and concentration will ultimately remove all fickleness of mind and make it steady and calm.

4. THOUGHT-POWER

The thought-world is more real relatively than this physical universe. The power of thought is very great. The strength of your body, the strength of your mind, your success in life and the pleasure you give to others by your company—all depend on the nature and quality of your thoughts. You must know thought-culture and develop thought power.

A wrong thought binds. A right thought liberates. Therefore think rightly and attain freedom. Believe in the powers of the mind. Interest, attention, will, faith and concentration will bring the desired fruit. Remember that mind is born of the Atman through His Maya or Illusory Power.

How to develop Will-Power:

Attention, power of endurance, overcoming aversion, dislikes and irritations, fortitude in suffering, Tapas (austerities such as standing on one foot, sitting in the hot sun or Panchagni-Tapas before five fires, standing in cold water in piercing winter, raising the hands above and keeping them in the same position for an hour, fasting), patience, command of temper, forbearance, clemency, firmness in meeting danger, power of resistance to attack, Satyagraha, keeping up daily diary—all pave a long way in developing the will.

5. THOUGHTS AND CHARACTER

Man is not a creature of circumstances. His thoughts are the architect of his circumstances. A man of character builds a life out of circumstances. Thoughts are the bricks with which character is built.

Build your character; you can shape your life. Character is power, it is influence, it makes friends, it draws patronage and support. It opens a sure and easy way to wealth, honour, success and happiness.

Character is the determining factor in victory and defeat, success and failure, and in all the issues of life. A man of good character enjoys life herein and hereafter.

Small kind acts, small courtesies, small consideration, small benevolence, habitually practised in your social intercourses give a greater charm to your character than great platform lectures, discourses, oration, exhibition of talents, etc.

It is not wealth or power nor is it mere intellect that governs the world. It is moral character associated with moral excellence that really rules the entire universe.

Nothing in this world—wealth, name, fame, victory—is worth a fig or a straw, without character. Character must stand behind and back up everything. And, character is built by your thoughts.

6. CHECK THE WANDERING MIND

The wandering habit of the mind must be controlled by rendering it chaste and constant by Vichara. "A rolling stone gathers no moss." When you take up a book for study, you must finish it before you take up another. When you take up any work you must devote your wholehearted attention to the work on hand and finish it before you take up another work. "One thing at a time and that done well, is a very good rule as many can tell." This is a Yogi's way of doing. This is a very good rule for success in life.

A wavering mind jumps from one Sadhana to another Sadhana, from one Guru to another Guru, from Bhakti Yoga to Vedanta, from Rishikesh to Brindavan. This is extremely deleterious for the Sadhana. Stick to one Guru, one place, one form of Yoga, one kind of Sadhana. Be steady and firm. Then only you will succeed. Have a steady, resolute mind.

Discipline the mind. Self-punishment helps a lot in checking the wandering mind. Frighten the mind as if you will beat it with a whip or rod, whenever it wanders from the Lakshya, whenever it entertains evil thoughts.

7. FOOD AND MIND

Food has a direct and intimate connection with the mind and plays a vital part in the make-up of the mind. Sattvic diet calms the mind. Rajasic diet excites the mind. Mark the difference in nature between a tiger which lives on flesh and a cow which lives on grass.

Food plays an important role in meditation. For purposes of meditation, the food must be light, Sattvic and nutritious.

Different foods produce different effects in different compartments of the brain. Spiced dishes, sour things, black gram, onions, garlic, tea, wine, fish, meat, mustard oil, etc. excite passions and emotions and should, therefore, be avoided. They should be particularly avoided by Sadhakas. A Jijnasu (spiritual aspirant) should strictly give up meat, fish and alcoholic drinks as these makes the mind coarse and produce excitement in the mind. Heavy food brings Tandra (drowsiness) and Alasya (laziness). Tea should be given up. It destroys Virya. Sugar must be taken in moderation. It is better if it is given up.

It was because Narada had his impurity destroyed that the venerable Sanatkumara pointed out to him the way beyond darkness. The way which leads up beyond darkness, therefore, must be sought for in the purity of food, which involves in its train, the purity of mind.

8. PERSONALITY

Personality includes a man's character, intelligence, noble qualities, moral conduct, intellectual attainments, certain striking faculties, special traits or characteristics, bearing, countenance, voice, etc. It is the personality that distinguishes one man from another.

Good character gives a strong personality to man. People respect such a man. Personality can be developed. The practice of virtues is indispensable. One should try to be always cheerful. You must know how to behave and adjust yourself to other people. You must talk sweetly and gently. You must be polite, civil and courteous. You must treat others with respect and consideration. Humility is a virtue that subdues the hearts of others.

Behaviour is most important. An arrogant, stubborn and self-willed man can never have a strong personality. He is disliked by all. Be not agitated in your speech. Do not become nervous. When you greet a person, do not stand erect like the man who holds the gaslight in a marriage procession. Gently bow your head and pay respect.

A strong personality is a very valuable asset for you. You can develop it if you will. Win laurels of name and fame and attain success in life through the development of a dynamic personality.

9. ETHICS AND MORALITY

Ethics and morality are the basis of spiritual life. Without ethics philosophy is wishful thinking, and religion meaningless. A man who has no regard for ethics is more death-masked than the actually dead is. If you are ethical then you become more powerful than an intellectual man. Ethics gives a sustaining stamina to life. Spirituality, religion and ethics are synonymous terms. It is erroneous to distinguish them separately.

Similarly, morality coexists with ethics or spirituality. Moral culture prepares you for the realisation of the Advaitic Truth: All indeed is the Self.

Straightforwardness, truthfulness, non-violence, non-covetousness, absence of vanity and hypocrisy, absolute unselfishness, honesty, mercy, humility, respect and tender regard for life, and a cosmic love, are the fundamentals of morality. Moral living starts through dedication to ideal principles and maxims. A moral man is he who is ever intent on annihilating his defects and weaknesses, who is endowed with good conduct and Sattvic disposition. Tolerance, absence of anger, greed and lust, unprovocable patience, meticulous consideration even for a child's sentiments, belief and emotion, imply real morality. Celibacy and self-restraint give stability to ethics and morality. Virtue survives only when it is kept in perpetual practice.

10. AHIMSA

Ahimsa (non-violence) is non-injuring in thought, word and deed. Ahimsa is supreme love. Ahimsa is soul-force. Ahimsa is Divine Life. Hate melts in the presence of love. Hate dissolves in the presence of Ahimsa. There is no power greater than Ahimsa. The practice of Ahimsa will make you fearless. The practice of Ahimsa develops will-power to a considerable degree. The power of Ahimsa is ineffable. Its glory is indescribable. Its greatness is immeasurable.

Ahimsa is a wonderful quality of the heart. It is a rare virtue. It transmutes a man into divinity. He who is established in Ahimsa is God Himself. All the Devas and the whole world pay homage to him. The power of Ahimsa is greater than the power of intellect. If one is well established in Ahimsa, the other four items of Yams, viz., Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha, will come by themselves. One has to kill his egoism if one wants to practise Ahimsa. He must control his emotions and impulses.

Ahimsa is a weapon not of the weak but of the strong. It is a shield not of the effeminate but of the potent. Ahimsa is a Mahavratam or a great universal vow. It should be practised by all people of all countries. It does not concern the Hindus or Indians alone. Whoever wishes to realise the Truth must practise Ahimsa.

11. SELFLESSNESS

Renunciation, the foremost requisite of all spiritual attainment, does not necessarily imply discarding of garments and an austere abandonment of the necessities of life, or seeking solitude in the wilderness. It is an expanded state of the mind, which, through the restraint of the outgoing senses, develops a power to lift up the individual consciousness from its separate tabernacle and allow it to find its real Self in the infinite manifestation and not merely in a particular idol or an individual body, be it one's own self.

This is the reason why sages of wisdom are not attached to any physical sheath in particular. For all bodies are theirs. This leads to an indifference to a separate existence. Those who merely feign indifference to their body need not necessarily possess this Infinite Consciousness; for they are cheated by an arrogant attachment to the limited external pleasures from asceticism. It is another form of worldliness, rather more formidable and very difficult to transform. Aspirants have to be warned against such self-deceit, and failure to progress through ethical perfection and selfless service.

Selflessness is not merely self-denial or service done without reward. The experience of selflessness is achieved through beholding the one Self in each and every being, including the wicked and the ungrateful. Selflessness is the kernel of all conscious efforts directed towards Self-realisation.

12. THE TERRIBLE ENEMY, ATTACHMENT

The terrible enemy of Immortality is attachment or Moha. It is very difficult to get rid of attachment. The bee can make holes even in wood; but it perishes on account of its attachment to honey. It sits on the flowers to gather honey. It sits on the lotus in the evening and slowly sucks honey. The lotus closes itself in the evening when the sun sets. The bee does not want to get out of the flower on account of attachment. It foolishly thinks, "I will get out of the flower tomorrow what the sun rises." An elephant comes, crushes the lotus and with it the bee also. This is the case with man also. He too gets attached to the various objects of the world and perishes.

The serpent has the frog in its mouth. Only the head of the frog is outside. It will be devoured within a few minutes. Yet, even in this condition, the wretched frog projects its tongue outside to catch and eat an insect or two. Even so, O ignorant man, you are already in the mouth of Kala or Time. You will be nowhere in a few minutes. Yet you crave for and cling to the sensual objects again and again. You have become a slave of Moha or delusion and attachment.

Time is most precious. You do not realise the value of time. When death is waiting to devour you, you will repent for the days, months, and years you have wasted in idle gossiping and sensual pleasures. Do Sadhana when there is yet time, when you are young and the body is in health. You cannot do any spiritual practice during old age.

13. THE GREATEST HIDDEN ENEMY

The chief of man's enemies is within himself. It is egoism. Ego coexists with mind. When the mind perishes, ego also perishes. Chitta is subconscious mind. It is the mind-stuff. It is the storehouse of memory. Samskaras or impressions of actions are embedded here. It is one of the four parts of Antahkarana or inner instruments, viz., mind, intellect, Chitta and Ahamkara or egoism.

In egoism is bondage. In egolessness is freedom. Egoism is at the bottom of all great blunders. Ego is the veil between God and the soul. When the ego vanishes, then is the realisation of universality or cosmic consciousness. Ego is the cause for the sorrows of life and miseries of the Samsara. Slay egoism—your arch-enemy—through self-sacrifice, self-surrender, self-denial, service, humility, prayer, worship and identification with Atman. Watch the mind. Mind is the slayer of the soul. Slay this mind ruthlessly through the sword of discrimination. Fear, anger, greed, hatred, lust, jealousy are symptoms of an impure mind. Feeling of superiority and inferiority are rooted in egoism. They generate tension between individuals. With the awakening of the mind, there arises consciousness of duality. Duality is ignorance. From duality arises fear, desire, etc. Silence your senses and mind and commune with the Lord. You will enjoy eternal peace and bliss now.

14. BE HAPPY IN ANY ENVIRONMENT

Never complain against bad environments. Create your own mental world wherever you remain and wherever you go. There are some difficulties and disadvantages wherever you go. If the mind deludes you, at every moment and at every step, try to overcome the obstacles and difficulties by suitable means. Do not try to run away from bad, unfavourable environments. God has placed you there to make you grow quickly.

If you get all sorts of comforts in a place, you will not grow strong. Your mind will be puzzled in a new place when you cannot get these comforts. Therefore, make the best use of all places. Never complain against surroundings and environments. Live in your own mental world. Nothing can upset your mind. You will find Raga-Dvesha even in the eternal snowy regions of the Himalayas, near Gangotri. You cannot get an ideal place and ideal surroundings in any part of the world. Remember that this world is a relative plane of good and evil. Try to live happily in any place, under any condition. You will become a strong and dynamic personality. This is a great secret. With this you can conquer any difficulty and achieve success in any undertaking.

15. HOLY COMPANY

The human mind is a very receptive instrument. If you place it in evil company, it will acquire evil tendencies. If you place it in holy company, it will acquire divine traits. The easy way to reach God is to live in the company of saints and practise their teaching. The world of a sage enliven the heart, and clear the doubts of ignorance. Try to profit as much as you can by their instructions.

To benefit from the company of saints, you have to prepare yourself first. Do not go with any preconceived notion or prejudice. Go with an open, receptive mind. Approach them humbly, respectfully. Assimilate what appeals to you. If some of their teachings do not appeal to you, do not form a hasty opinion. If you do not like them, you need not take them to heart. What may be suitable to another, may not be suitable to you. Yet, with regard to broad fundamentals, there can be no difference of opinion. At the time of thinking of saintly personages, the mind gets moulded into the shape of the qualities of which it thinks, and thereby becomes pure. Meditate in the presence of a sage. You will get inner light, which will clear your doubts.

16. WORLD-PEACE

Do not feel that you are only an ordinary individual, that unless you have cooperation from thousands and thousands all over the world, nothing of real importance will be done. Every thought sent out by you, the humble individual that you think you are, in the proper manner with full trust in God, from pure unselfishness, has behind it the support of all well-wishers, embodied and disembodied.

Unconsciously all people who are like you take the thought that you have projected and in accordance with the capacity that they have, send out similar thoughts. And you will be setting in motion great forces which will work together and put down the lowly and mean thoughts generated by the selfish and the wicked.

All these holy thoughts will come down with tremendous force to subjugate and destroy the evil forces which at present threaten to overpower the good. Will you not, therefore, make now this resolve of devoting at least one hour every day to project thoughts of peace so that the present troubles and turmoils of the world may cease?

17. HOW TO BECOME A YOGI

Becoming a Yogi does not involve the abandonment of anyone or the neglect of any duties. It entails only a change of your attitude to life and in the methods pursued for liberating yourself. For, true renunciation is, after all, a matter of the mind. By all means, live in the world and play your part in it worthily. But do not allow yourself to be tainted by worldliness.

During and in between your various actions, repeat mentally your Ishta Mantra. This will surcharge your soul. In the train, travelling to work, keep Mouna; make it a vow; and repeat mentally the Mantra. At office, once at least in each hour, put down the pen, push away the papers, sit back and close your eyes, forget the immediate external claims on your attention, and pray. Repeat the Mantra for a couple of minutes. Then rightaway plunge into your work. You will doubly fit to do the work at hand. You will never feel tired. On your return trip also, keep the vow of silence; repeat the Mantra mentally. Do not waste even a moment. In the bus queue, or in the railway station, any spare moment, soak it with the mental repetition of the Mantra. Everyone can find some time for this.

Whenever you find a few minutes leisure, utilise it in Japa, meditation or study of good books. Give plenty in charity. Charity purifies quickly. Observe Mouna as much as possible. Never indulge in idle gossiping; utilise that time in Japa and Dhyana.

18. PRACTICAL VEDANTA

If you want to enjoy really the supreme bliss of the non-dual Self, if you want to become a real, practical Advaita Vedantin or a sage, try to comfort the sorrowful, help the poor, heal or nurse the sick. Can anyone who attempts to behold or realise the one Self hidden in all beings keep quiet without serving the humanity? All forms are the manifestations of the one Supreme Lord. All bodies belong to Him. Develop compassion and love for all creatures.

How can you worship God who is in all creatures unless you honour and respect everybody? Treat everybody with respect. View all with an equal eye. Do virtuous actions. Behold the Lord in all beings. Have intense and exclusive devotion for the Lord. Centre your thoughts exclusively on Him. Desire nothing, not even Moksha.

Brahman is like the sun and the Ganges. The sun sheds its light on the wicked and the virtuous. A rogue and a saint can drink the water of the Ganges. Develop equal vision (Samadrishti) like the sun and the Ganges.

Love and serve thy neighbour. Gladly and willingly give to others of what you most desire for yourself. This will develop cosmic love, unity, and equal vision in you. You will soon attain Brahma-Jnana (Wisdom of the Self). You will soon see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self (Samyag Drishti).

19. PRARABDHA KARMA

When you are born, the mind is not a mere *tabula rasa*, (a smooth or blank tablet or a blank sheet of paper). A child is born with his Samskaras, his past experiences transmuted into mental and moral tendencies and powers. The mind evolves through the impressions received from the universe through the senses. It will take many bodies till it gathers the complete experience of the world.

All Samskaras lie dormant in the Chitta as latent activities, not only of this life but of all previous innumerable lives from Anadi Kala (beginningless time). In human life, only those Samskaras which are appropriate to that particular type of birth will operate and come into play. The other kinds of Samskaras will remain concealed and dormant.

As a merchant closing the year's ledger and opening a new one, does not enter in the new one all the items of the old but only its balances, so does the Spirit hand on to the new brain its judgements on the experiences of a life that is closed, and the conclusions it has arrived at. If you have good Samskaras you will have good desires and good thoughts and vice versa. Even if you have indulged in vicious actions up to the age of forty, by practising virtuous actions, Svadhyaya, meditation, etc., from this moment, these Samskaras will prompt you to do more virtuous deeds. They will stimulate good desires and noble thoughts.

20. YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

Yoga of synthesis is suitable for the vast majority of persons today. It is a unique Yoga.

Man thinks, feels and wills. He is a three-wheeled chariot. He has abundant emotion and feelings. He reasons and ratiocinates. He must develop his heart, intellect and hand. Then alone can he attain perfection. Many aspirants have lopsided development. They do not possess integral development.

For the chariot or tricycle to move smoothly the three wheels must be in perfect order. Even so this body chariot will move in harmony if you develop the heart, intellect and hand. Further, there are three doshas or defects in the mind, viz., Mala (impurity), Vikshepa (tossing of the mind), and Avarana (veiling).

Mala should be removed by Nishkama Karma Yoga or selfless service. Vikshepa should be removed by Upasana or worship (Bhakti Yoga). Avarana should be removed by study of Vedantic literature, Vichara or enquiry and Self-realisation.

Hence everyone should have one Yoga as a basic Yoga, mixed with selected aspects of the other Yogas.

A little practice of Hatha Yoga (Asanas and Pranayama) will give you good health. Raja Yoga will steady your mind. Upasana and Karma Yoga will purify

your heart, and prepare you for the practice of Vedanta. Sankirtan will relax your mind and inspire you. Practise this unique Yoga of Synthesis and attain Self-realisation quickly.

21. DHYANA YOGA SADHANA

Before saturating the mind with thoughts of Brahman you will have to assimilate the divine ideas first. Then comes realisation at once without a moment's delay. Remember the "triplet", always: ASSIMILATION-SATURATION-REALISATION.

Your will should be rendered strong, pure and irresistible by more Atma-Chintan, eradication of Vasanas, control of the senses and more inner life. If you are in the company of Sannyasins, if you read books on Yoga, Vedanta, etc., a mental adhesion takes place in the mind for attaining God-realisation, God-consciousness. Mere mental adhesion will not help you much. Burning Vairagya, burning Mumukshatva, capacity for spiritual Sadhana, intense and constant application and Nididhyasana (meditation) are needed. Then only Self-knowledge is possible.

Leading a virtuous life is not by itself sufficient for God-realisation. This only prepares the mind as a fit instrument for concentration and meditation. The latter only will eventually lead to Self-realisation.

You will find very often these terms in the Gita: "Manmanah", "Matpara". They mean that you will have to give your full mind to God for Self-realisation Even if one ray of the mind runs outside, it is impossible to attain

God-consciousness. You will have to make pure by Brahmic-Chintana (thinking and reflecting on the Absolute) the turbid mind filled with Vasanas and false Sankalpas. Then only will there be pure illumination.

22. BUDDHI YOGA

After dealing at length with the immortality of the Atman, and the intellectual analysis of discrimination, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, in the Gita: "Hear Me expound the Yoga of Discrimination or rather the Yoga of Buddhi-culture, of the Union of Buddhi with the Self."

Why? Because if you practise this Buddhi Yoga, you will snap the bonds of Karma and liberate yourself. Karma by itself is neither binding nor liberating; but it is your attitude, your motive, the mode of your Buddhi that is either binding or liberating. For the senses and the mind by themselves are incapable of discriminative action, except in the light provided by the Buddhi. Normally the Buddhi is tossed helplessly on the hot-bed of Vasanas and Trishnas, and it is in active conjunction with the senses. It supplies the motive force tainted with desires. Actions performed by the mind and the senses with the Buddhi in union with the Self do not bind the Jiva to Samsara; and even they will be pure, noble and divine, for the Buddhi in whose light they function is in communion with the Atman and therefore compels them to be in tune with the Infinite.

It might take a long time to achieve the complete detachment of the Buddhi from the mind and the senses. Progress may be slow or rapid, but progress you will, and every fresh conquest over attachment to senses and sense-objects will hasten the perfection of Buddhi-Yoga.

23. WHY SVADHYAYA

If, for a moment, the aspirant relaxes his vigilance and falls into a spiritual or ethical slumber, then the lower pull asserts itself and, immediately, the allegiance shifts from the higher to the lower self. If, at that time, he comes into contact with sensual objects, there takes place a setback in the spiritual life.

One of the ways of avoiding such a retrogression is through Svadhyaya, study of scriptures, and the lives of saints daily. This will bring a host of powerful and positive ideas to your mind and, at once, sharpen your mental powers, inspiring you and lifting and enabling you to conquer the lower forces in your everyday life. Therefore, Svadhyaya should not be given up even for a single day in the life of the Sadhaka.

The company of saints has a power, whether you are aware of it or not, to strengthen all the spiritual factors you have in you. We may not always be blessed to get the company of a God-realised saint all the twelve months in a year. But we must try our best for such company. If this is not possible, the study of books written by them is a very powerful method of keeping up this vigilance and spiritual wakefulness in man. When you study the sacred books, you are in tune with the authors who are realised souls. You draw inspiration and become ecstatic.

24. MUSIC: A YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

Music attracts every living being. Music melts the hardest heart. Music softens the brutal nature of man. Music heals man of a million maladies. Wherefrom has music derived this mighty power? From the Supreme Music of Brahman, the Sacred Pranava. Music is intended to reverberate the Pranava-Nada in your heart. For OM or the Pranava is your real name, your real Svarupa. Therefore, you love to hear music, which is but the most melodious intonation of your own essential name. When the mind thus gets attracted and unified with one's essential nature, the great Power of God stored up there wells up within and deals with body and mind. The Bhakta enters into Bhava-Samadhi by singing devotional music. He comes face to face with the greatest storehouse of Knowledge and Wisdom, Ananda or Supreme Bliss. Therefore, he emerges from this Samadhi as a Jnani and radiates Peace, Bliss and Wisdom all round.

Music is a synthesis of the various Yogas or paths to God-realisation. Besides, music is both pleasant and good, both Preya and Sreya. That music, Sankirtan, is an integral part of Bhakti Yoga it is needless to mention. Sankirtan and Bhakti are inseparable.

25. DEATH IS NOT THE END OF LIFE

The individual souls or Jiva build various bodies to display their activities and gain experience from this world. They enter the bodies and leave them when they become unfit to live in. The entrance of a soul into a body is called birth. The soul's departure from the body is called death.

The individual soul is an image or reflection of the Supreme Soul or Paramatman. Soul is spirit, it is immaterial. It is intelligence or consciousness. The individual soul is reflected Chaitanya. It is this individual soul that departs from the body after its death and goes to heaven, with the senses, mind, Prana, impressions, desires and tendencies. It is endowed with a subtle astral body when it proceeds to heaven.

The individual soul has become impure through cravings, desires, egoism, pride, greed, lust, and likes and dislikes. Hence it is finite (Parichhinna), endowed with limited knowledge (Alpajna) and limited power (Alpa-Shaktiman). The Supreme Soul is Infinite, Omniscient and Omnipotent. It is an embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss.

Purify your mind. Steady it. Fix the mind on the Supreme Soul. Meditate and realise your essential divine

nature. You will be freed from the wheel of births and deaths. You will attain eternal bliss and Immortality.



If you want to enjoy really the supreme bliss of the non-dual Self, if you want to become a real, practical Advaita Vedantin or a sage, try to comfort the sorrowful, help the poor, heal or nurse the sick. Can anyone who attempts to behold or realise the one Self hidden in all beings keep quiet without serving the humanity? All forms are the manifestations of the one Supreme Lord. All bodies belong to Him. Develop compassion and love for all creatures.

How can you worship God who is in all creatures unless you honour and respect everybody? Treat everybody with respect. View all with an equal eye. Do virtuous actions. Behold the Lord in all beings. Have intense and exclusive devotion for the Lord. Centre your thoughts exclusively on Him. Desire nothing, not even Moksha.

Brahman is like the sun and the Ganges. The sun sheds its light on the wicked and the virtuous. A rogue and a saint can drink the water of the Ganges. Develop equal vision (Samadrishti) like the sun and the Ganges.

Love and serve thy neighbour. Gladly and willingly give to others what you most desire for yourself. This will develop cosmic love, unity, and equal vision in you. You will soon attain Brahma-Jnana (Wisdom of the Self). You will soon see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self (Samyag Drishti).



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