

THE VOICE from BEYOND THE VOID



Words of Guruji

What one does in the initial days of spirituality, one need not continue it until the end. If you have a deep desire of attaining moksha in the initial days, even moksha thought should not be there. Sri Anandamayi Ma used to say that, "The intense desire for God-realization is itself the way to it." This will lead to the final goal; a still mind is what is required.

So what is the method?

- Concentrate on one item – God
- When concentrating on one God, after some time, even leave the thought of God. Say after 1-2 years.
- Then again and again remain quiet, no God, no thought, no I
- You don't exist in that state for yourself and you become a nobody = no 'body'
- When you are not there, what remains is one existence that already remains. And That always remains .

This is the instant capsule for Moksha.

Inside this issue:

Swamiji's Birthday Celebration Update	2
The Importance of Prayers	3
The Enemy Within - Pramada	8
Haripatha—Translation	13
Memories of our Gurudev	16

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- Nobody is prepared to believe in the power of the Lord. They go here and there for help when problem occurs instead of calling upon God.
- Other than God, nobody, nothing is important enough to be kept in memory.
- Prarabdha is for the body and not for the mind. While exhausting prarabdha, you can keep your mind on the Lord.
- Never think that the world is real. It will give you a slap!

[Advice given by Swamiji to a devotee in 2013].

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in the various articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent Swamiji's views. The views are authors' own.

Swamiji's Birthday Celebration Update - 06 May 2016

The 87th Jayanthi of Poojya Gurudev Sri Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj was observed on 6th May 2016. The functions commenced from the evening of 28th April 2016 when the Srimad Bhagavata Saptaham commenced by recitation of Mahatmyam. This was followed by seven days of recitation of Srimad Bhagavatham in the traditional manner and chanting of Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam. Swamiji's devotees, Sri Ramakrishnan from Thiruvananthapuram and Sri Viswanathan from Palakkad conducted the Saptaham.

On the Jayanthi morning, the samadhi mandap was decorated with flowers. Food offering was made. Sampurna Bhagavad Gita Prayanam was conducted at 7am. This was followed by release of the Third Volume of the Selected Works of Swamiji by Sri V. S. Ramanan, President of Sri Ramanasramam by handing over a volume to Swamiji's close friend Sri K.V. Subramanyam (KVS). This was followed by collective chanting of Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam, Lalita Sahasranamam and Akshara Manamalai.

The devotees collectively performed Archana at the shrine reciting the Guru Ashtottaram. Thereafter Vedic Hymns (Purusha Sooktam, Sri Sooktam, Durga Sooktam and Bhagya Sooktam) were chanted. The Naivedyam (lunch offering cooked with devotion by Swamiji's lady devotees) offering was made at the Samadhi Mandap and Arati was performed. The assembled sadhus were offered Dakshina and honoured. The function concluded with lunch for all the assembled devotees and the villagers. In the afternoon, one of the devotees of Swamiji along with a group of children chanted the Ribhu Gita at the samadhi hall.

At Vasishta Guha the Jayanthi was observed with Akhanda Ramayan Path followed by Bhandara. The New Delhi devotees assembled at a residence of a devotee at Dwaraka and had observations spanning over three days from 6-8 May which included Akhanda Ramayan Path, Havan and Bhandara. In the US some of the devotees assembled and worshipped Sri Swamiji at a devotee's residence.



Special Article Series: The Importance of Prayers

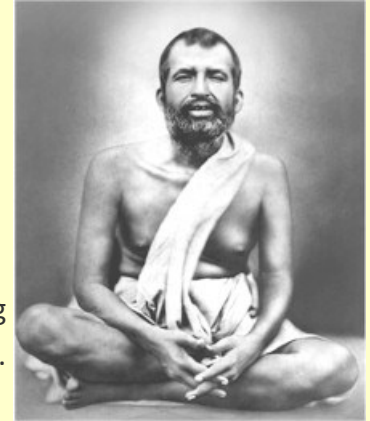
Words of Sri Ramakrishna

This article contains the words of the Master, Sri Ramakrishna with regard to prayer. For sadhakas who are on the spiritual path, the Master reiterated the importance of prayers in sadhana and in many situations deemed it as one of the best methods to realise God. He was always in constant communion with God and through His prayers, he was teaching his devotees how to pray.

The following article contains the Master's words with regard to:

1. The importance of prayer
2. How to pray and how prayers help in realising our goal
3. Some of the prayers told by the Master
4. Questions from devotees with regard to prayers

We hope this article will be helpful to spiritual sadhakas by answering their questions with regard to the role of prayers on the spiritual path. May the blessings of the Master and our Gurudev be on all.



The following pages are the words of Sri Ramakrishna on this topic which have been reproduced from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

1. The importance of Prayer

In the Kaliyuga, the best way is bhakti yoga, the path of devotion – singing the praises of the Lord, and prayer. God can be realised by means of all paths. The same God is invoked by different names. It is necessary to seek the company of holy men, practise prayer, and listen to the instruction of the guru. These purify the mind. Then one sees God. Dirt can be removed from water by a purifying agent. Then one sees one's reflection in it. One cannot see one's face in a mirror if the mirror is covered with dirt. After the purification of the heart one obtains divine love. Then one sees God, through His grace.

It will not do for the sadhaka to renounce duties. He should perform his duties, such as worship, japa, meditation, prayer, and pilgrimage.

Constantly you have to chant the name and glories of God and give up worldly thoughts as much as you can. With the greatest effort you may try to bring water into your field for your crops, but it may all leak out through holes in the ridges. Then all your efforts to bring the water by digging a canal will be futile. You will feel restless for God when your heart becomes pure and your mind free from attachment to the things of the world. Then alone will your prayer reach God. A telegraph wire cannot carry messages if it has a break or some other defect.

2. How to pray and how prayers help in realising our goal

Through earnest prayer, one receives the grace of God and realises Him. One should pray to God with a longing heart. God certainly listens to prayer if it is sincere. There is no doubt about it. A man may call on God by any name; if he is sincere in his prayer, he will certainly reach Him. He will succeed if he has longing.

One should pray to God with sincere longing. God cannot but listen to prayer if it is sincere. Two things are necessary for the realization of God; faith and self-surrender. Man is ignorant by nature. Errors are natural to him. Can a one-seer pot hold four seers of milk? Whatever path you may follow, you must pray to God with a restless heart. He is the Ruler of the soul within. He will surely listen to your prayer if it is sincere. Whether you follow the ideal of the Personal God or that of the Impersonal Truth, you will realize God alone, provided you are restless for Him. A cake with icing tastes sweet whether you eat it straight or sidewise.

It is to be noted that in several sections of the Gospel, Sri Ramakrishna reiterated that prayers need to be sincere. Sri Ramakrishna used to Himself say, "I used to cry for God all alone, with a longing heart. I used to weep, 'O God, where art Thou?' Weeping thus, I would lose all consciousness of the world."

3. Some of the Prayers told by the Master

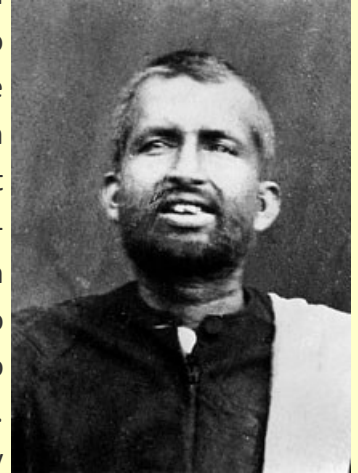
Prayer to the Divine Mother

Sri Ramakrishna: To my Divine Mother I prayed only for pure love. I offered flowers at Her Lotus Feet and prayed to Her: 'Mother, here is Thy virtue, here is Thy vice. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy knowledge, here is Thy ignorance. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy purity, here is Thy impurity. Take them both, Mother, and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy dharma, here is Thy adharma. Take them both, Mother, and grant me only pure love for Thee.'

I used to pray to Her in this way: 'O Mother! O Blissful One! Reveal Thyself to me. Thou must!' Again, I would say to Her: 'O Lord of the lowly! O Lord of the universe! Surely I am not outside Thy universe. I am bereft of knowledge. I am without discipline. I have no devotion. I know nothing. Thou must be gracious and reveal Thyself to me.'



'O Mother, I throw myself on Thy mercy; I take shelter at Thy Hallowed Feet. I do not want bodily comforts; I do not crave name and fame; I do not seek the eight occult powers. Be gracious and grant that I may have pure love for Thee, a love unsmitten by desire, untainted by any selfish ends—a love craved by the devotee for the sake of love alone. And grant me the favour, O Mother, that I may not be deluded by Thy world-bewitching maya, that I may never be attached to the world, to 'woman and gold', conjured up by Thy inscrutable maya! O Mother, there is no one but thee whom I may call my own. Mother, I do not know how to worship; I am without austerity; I have neither devotion nor knowledge. Be gracious, Mother, and out of Thy infinite mercy grant me love for Thy Lotus Feet.'



Prayer for the welfare of Devotees

The Master was weeping and praying to the Mother in a voice choked with emotion. He prayed to Her with tearful eyes for the welfare of the devotees:

"Mother, may those who come to You have all their desires fulfilled! But please don't make them give up everything at once, Mother. Well, You may do whatever You like in the end. If You keep them in the world, Mother, then please reveal Yourself to them now and then. Otherwise, how will they live? How will they be encouraged if they don't see You once in a while? But You may do whatever You like in the end."

What to pray for - Teaching the devotees

A lover of God prays to the Divine Mother: 'O Mother, I am very much afraid of selfish actions. Such actions have desires behind them, and if I perform them I shall have to reap their fruit. But it is very difficult to work in a detached spirit. I shall certainly forget Thee, O Mother, if I involve myself in selfish actions. Therefore I have no use for them. May my actions, O Divine Mother, be fewer every day till I attain Thee. May I perform, without attachment to the results, only what action is absolutely necessary for me. May I have great love for Thee as I go on with my few duties. May I not entangle myself in new work so long as I do not realize Thee. But I shall perform it if I receive Thy command. Otherwise not.'

In case we are finding it difficult to phrase our prayers to God, some of the prayers told by Sri Ramakrishna may be very helpful to get us started on our journey of praying to the Lord.

4. Questions from devotees with regard to prayers

Question 1: Does God listen to our prayer for bhakti?

Sri Ramakrishna: Surely. I can assure you of that a hundred times. But the prayer must be genuine and earnest. Do worldly-minded people weep for God as they do for wife and children? At Kamarpukur the wife of a certain man fell ill. The man thought she would not recover; he began to tremble and was about to faint. Who feels that way for God?

As long as a man is conscious of 'I' and 'you', and as long as he feels that it is he who prays or meditates, so long will he feel that God is listening to his prayer and that God is a Person. Then he must say: 'O God, Thou art the Master and I am Thy servant. Thou art the whole and I am a part of Thee. Thou art the Mother and I am Thy child.' At that time there exists a feeling of difference: 'I am one and Thou art another.' It is God Himself who makes us feel this difference; and on account of this difference one sees man and woman, light and darkness, and so on. As long as one is aware of this difference, one must accept Sakti, the Personal God. It is God who has put 'I consciousness' in us. You may reason a thousand times; still this 'I' does not disappear. As long as 'I-consciousness' exists, God reveals Himself to us as a Person.

The following passage is repeated several times in the Gospel, "To love God is the essence of the whole thing. Bhakti alone is the essence. Narada said to Rama, 'May I always have pure love for Your Lotus Feet; and may I not be deluded by Your world-bewitching maya!' Rama said to him, 'Ask for some other boon.' 'No,' said Narada, 'I don't want anything else. May I have love for Your Lotus Feet. This is my only prayer.'" So a sincere devotee can pray for bhakti and constant communion and love for His Lotus Feet.

Once again the following prayer of the Master is reproduced here, "Here, Mother, take Thy sin; here, take Thy virtue. I don't want either of these; give me only real bhakti. Here, Mother, take Thy good; here, take Thy bad. I don't want any of Thy good or bad; give me only real bhakti. Here, Mother, take Thy dharma; here, take Thy adharm. I don't want any of Thy dharma or adharm; give me only real bhakti. Here, Mother, take Thy knowledge; here, take Thy ignorance. I don't want any of Thy knowledge or ignorance; give me only real bhakti. Here, Mother, take Thy purity; here, take Thy impurity. Give me only real bhakti."

Question 2: How to pray for knowledge of Brahman?

If you seek Brahmajnana, the Knowledge of the attributeless Brahman, then proceed to the real Sun through Its reflection. Pray to Brahman with attributes, who listens to your prayers, and He Himself will give you full Knowledge of Brahman; for that which is Brahman with attributes is verily Brahman without attributes, that which is Brahman is verily Sakti. One realizes this non-duality after the attainment of Perfect Knowledge.

Question 3: How to get rid of 'woman and gold' and animal feeling?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Woman and gold' alone is the world; that alone is maya. Because of it you cannot see or think of God. After the birth of one or two children, husband and wife should live as brother and sister and talk only of God. Then both their minds will be drawn to God, and the wife will be a help to the husband on the path of spirituality.

None can taste divine bliss without giving up his animal feeling. A devotee should pray to God to help him get rid of this feeling. It must be a sincere prayer. God is our Inner Controller; He will certainly listen to our prayer if it is sincere.

Question 4: How can we keep our minds on God? If we are not able to practice, what to do?

Sri Ramakrishna: Abhyasayoga, the yoga of practice. You should practise calling on God every day. It is not possible to succeed in one day; through daily prayer you will come to long for God.

Words of Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

All the prayers have to be answered, the timing could be different. Even if you have one minute, pray. The easiest way to the Lord is through prayer. Meditation requires concentration, prayer is easy. You may pray, "O Lord, unless Your Grace comes to me, how can I go on this path? The idea of this path was because of you and it is you who now has to bestow your Grace for my progress." Prayer itself will take you ahead.

On a lighter note, one of the prayers of a child to God, as told by our Swamiji:

A child of 3 or 4 years of age before she went to bed she knelt on the ground and prayed, "Please protect my mummy always as she cooks nice delicious dishes. Please protect my daddy too as he protects my home. Please take care of my elder brother as he takes me out to garden as my father is busy. Take care of baby sister as she is fun to be with. Last but not least – please protect yourself dear Lord as otherwise we are all lost."



The Enemy Within - Pramada

By Swami Sadasivananda Giri

This article was written during the precious lifetime of Swami Shanatanada Puri. He not only was the guiding light that illumined the understanding within this work, but directly contributed to the exact definition of the often-misdirected definition of Pramada.

In the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita a description of the battlefield and the warriors thereon reveal that the Kaurava's legions number eleven, while the Pandavas only amount to seven.

Sri Krishna further declares in the Gita that the odds of victory for right discernment and effort by Arjuna (symbolizing each one of us), even with such a one as Sri Krishna Himself as mentor and guide, were against Arjuna by a ratio of eleven to seven. The foot soldiers of the ego simply outnumber our virtuous tendencies.

As we are against bad odds and are creatures of bad habit, our ego can impel us, even against our own will, to make bad choices. In all honesty, such bad choices cause us critical damage, resulting in lives of sorrow and misery. All our suffering comes from vainly seeking to appease the ego, an enemy whose appetite is insatiable.



We cannot maneuver and progress towards victory over an enemy that outnumbers us, in such an inimical battlefield called the human mind, without soliciting real help. Without an experienced guide as the General of our forces, we may even court a fatal consequence.

For those who have sought and found the real help of Bhagavan Ramana as their experienced guide, they hear his first and foremost rule of engagement as a familiar declaration: "Practice makes perfect."

We are also told that this process is not a quick fix, which instantly heralds liberation. Once the Maharshi was asked by a devotee:

Devotee: “How long is the practice to continue?”

The Maharshi replied: “Till success is achieved and until yoga- liberation becomes permanent. Success begets success. If one distraction is conquered the next is conquered and so on, until all are finally conquered. The process is like reducing an enemy’s fort by slaying its manpower - one by one, as each issues out.” *[Reference 1]*

By legitimizing and even deifying our ego’s habitual heedless indifferent distraction to God, and by labeling its urges as the ‘inner guru’ or ‘voice of our spirit’, we inevitably fall into the death grip of pramada, literally defined as the root cause of all pains and problems afflicting human beings.

In the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata epic, the blind King Dhritarashtra, who symbolizes the blindness of the ego, cynically asks the Sage Sanat Sujata: “What is death?” The Sage replies, “Pramada is death!”

“Pramadam vai mrtumham bravimi”

(I call negligence itself death) *[Reference 2]*

“Because fall by negligence is fall from one’s real nature, then forgetfulness arises, this ensues the sense of the “I” in the Anatman, the cause of all miseries. Sankara adds that forgetfulness confounds even a learned man through defects of intellect for Maya covers a man who is out-ward-bent even if he has annulled the Panchakoshas. Furthermore, if the mind, outward bent, strays away even in the least from its ideal, it will fall continuously; the one who has fallen comes to ruin then there is no going up. For a man of discrimination and in deep concentration on Brahman, there is no other death than Pramada or inadvertence.” *[Reference 3]*

The actual conversations within the Mahabharata leave no doubt about this truth:

Vaisampayana said: The wise and great-spirited King Dhritarastra

Acknowledged the words that Vidura had spoken,
And wished to gain the highest insight
He questioned in secret Sanat Sujata.

Dhritarastra said: Sanat Sujata, I hear that you teach
That indeed there is no death at all,
Yet Gods and Asuras studied the Brahman
To achieve non-death – so what is the truth?

Sanat Sujata said: Some hold non-death comes about by the rite,
 While some maintain that there is no death.
 Now listen to me, king, while I explain,
 So that you may cherish no doubts about it.
 O King, both these truths are primordial!
 The death that the seers believe in is folly.
 I say to you distraction is death.

It should be understood that the definitions of Sanskrit words are subject to philosophical intention, and thus are prey to individual bias. Therefore disagreement and even argument concerning proper meaning and usage are commonplace. Nevertheless, the most learned scholars agree that the ancient definition of the word *pramada* comes from its usage in this scripture. “Mada” means intoxication, when prefixed by “pra” it becomes intense intoxication to the degree of madness.

The ancient Sainly King Bartruhari, who became an enlightened Sage, used the word *pramada* in the correct spiritual sense indicated by the Sage Sanat Sujata. He proclaimed:

“Peetva mohamayeem *pramada* madiram unmatta bhootam jagat”

“This world (its inhabitants therein) has become mad after having drunk the wine of negligence (*pramada*: laxity towards the spiritual goal), which being of the form of *moha* (delusion), has overwhelming power to delude you.”

The Sage Sanat Sujata is indicating that the presence of *pramada* brings about a spiritual death. For the spiritual madness that at first manifests as a fever of willful and angry indifference to the consequences of inattention to and negligence of God, is rendered deadly when it becomes habitual. This madness and anger literally destroys our faculty of discrimination, which before our “disease of *pramada*” was our guiding light on the path to Godliness.

Sri Krishna clearly states this truth in Chapter 2:63 in the Bhagavad Gita:

This world (its inhabitants therein) has become mad after having drunk the wine of negligence (pramada: laxity towards the spiritual goal), which being of the form of moha (delusion), has overwhelming power to delude you.

The secondary meaning of pramada is procrastination and a distracted laziness, it means not taking any immediate action to rectify this most soul-stripping heedlessness.

“From anger comes delusion; from delusion the loss of memory; from loss of memory the destruction of discrimination; from the destruction of discrimination he perishes.”

This is not to be defined as forgetfulness of the Self, unless one admits to a willful and belligerent forgetfulness. It is clearly distraction, willfully averting our attention from the consequences of bad habits.

Realization of the Self, as declared by Sri Ramana Maharshi to be the sole goal of life, comes when we overcome and conquer the obstacles that stand before us as enemies in the guise of seemingly insignificant habits. Therefore Bhagavan declares in no uncertain terms:



“The obstacles that hinder realization are habits of the mind (vasanas), and the aids to realization are the teachings of the scriptures and of realized souls.” *[Reference 4]*

The secondary meaning of pramada is procrastination and a distracted laziness, it means not taking any immediate action to rectify this most soul-stripping heedlessness.

One may say: “God’s grace is always there, so somehow I will get back on my spiritual feet.” But the fatality of staying “dead level” without motivation to rise up comes upon us as pramada gives birth to its only-begotten son. This offspring of pramada is known in Sanskrit as duragraha. Duragraha means the adamant determination to do that which you know you should never do. The compound spiritual fracture of being indifferent to God and habitually partaking in negative action with utter disregard for the negative consequences creates a karmic bloodletting fatal even to the strongest constitution.

Regardless of whatever label we choose to call this effort of removing bad habits, whether it be deemed purification, removal of defilement, awakening, being in oneness or even becoming still, it should be known that Bhagavan said it is “effort that instills purity” and stressed that without it the goal of vichara (enquiry) will not be reached.

In direct reference to this Sri Muruganar, one of the foremost direct disciples of Sri Ramana Maharshi, heard the following profound statement from Bhagavan and recorded it that our doubts might be cleared:

“Know that the wondrous jnana vichara is only for those who have attained purity of mind by softening and melting within. Without this softening and melting away of the mind, brought about by thinking of the feet of the Lord, the attachment to the “I” that adheres to the body will not cease to be.” [Reference 5]

Can this “thinking of the feet of the Lord”, prescribed by Bhagavan, be anything other than exactly what it says? Therefore, should we not get busy here and now to “fight the good fight” for spiritual attainment?



Let us leave our battle cry to the General of our forces:

Devotee: “Are we to keep anything against a rainy day; or to live a precarious life for spiritual attainments?”

Maharshi: “God looks after everything.” [Reference 6]

References:

1. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, recorded by Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, Sri Ramanashramam 2006, Talk 28, p. 29.*
2. *Mahabharata 5.41-42.*
3. *Sri Sankara’s Vivekacudamani, Sri Candrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri, Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan pp. 320-324*
4. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, recorded by Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, Sri Ramanashramam 2006, Talk 13, p. 5.*
5. *Padamalai, Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi Recorded by Muruganar, Avadhuta Foundation 2004, p. 186. (Reference to Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham, vol. 7, verse 340).*
6. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, recorded by Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, Sri Ramanashramam 2006, Talk 377, p 358.*

Haripatha—English Translation

Original text by Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj (or Dnyandev or Jnandev or Jnaneshwar) was one of the greatest saints of Maharashtra in the 13th century (1275–1296). Dnyaneshwar Maharaj (Lord of Jnyana or knowledge) was the son of a saint turned householder named Vittalpanth. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj had two brothers and a sister, Nivrutti, Sopana and Muktabai. Dnyaneshwar composed various works, including Dnyaneshwari, a commentary on Bhagavad Gita which later became a fundamental text of the Varkari sect. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj entered into sanjeevan samadhi, [a practice to sum up the life after entering into a deep meditative state] at a tender age of 21 years. On the 13th day of the dark half of the Kartik month of the Hindu calendar, in Alandi, he entered into sanjeevan samadhi. His samadhi lies in the Siddhesvara Temple complex in Alandi.

Haripatha, is one of the important works by Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, which has the quintessence of ancient scriptures. Haripatha is a collection of twenty seven abhangs [stanzas of devotional poetry] and it means, “Chant the name of Lord Hari.” It is the simplest way to remember the Lord. Jnana, Bhakti and Karma, these are the major paths to Self realisation. Supreme love for God is called devotion or bhakti. The lord is the nature of bliss. He is unconditioned by time, space or objectivity. Renouncing the ego, selfishness and attachment to external objects and total identification with the Lord is supreme devotion. One can develop love and devotion towards the Lord simply by chanting his divine name. This is the theme of Haripatha. There are no special qualifications necessary to remember the Lord. Attainment of four types of liberation is the goal of Haripatha. The divine name of Lord is both the means and the goal. To chant the Haripatha is one of the important vows of Warkaris [devotees of Lord Vitthal who annually perform a pilgrimage to Pandharpur]. All Warkaris sing Haripatha daily either individually or collectively. Haripatha extols various techniques of namasadhana by which seekers can reach the highest goal of Self Realisation.

The current newsletter has the first six abhangs from the English translation of Haripatha. The translation has been reproduced with permission of Mr. Subhash Maharaj Gethe, who has done a commendable job of translating the Haripatha. The subsequent newsletters will carry the rest of the translation of Haripatha.

Meditation of the Sagunarupa of Lord Vitthala

Meditation on the beautiful form of Lord Vitthala as standing on the brick, with his hands resting on his waist, is indeed true meditation. This very form with garland of Tulasi adorning his neck and yellow cloth on his waist is what I always want to contemplate upon. He shines with the crocodile [fish] shaped brilliant earrings and the Kausthubha jewel on



the neck. Sant Tukaram Maharaj says: Meditation on such a form alone gives me supreme happiness. I would ever like to behold the enchanting and auspicious face of Lord Vitthala.

1. One who stands at the door of the Lord, even for a moment, he attains all four kinds of liberation. Who can gauge the merits showered on a person who constantly chants the name of Lord Hari. Vedas and shastras unanimously proclaim vociferously, that even though a person is in samsara, when he chants the name of Lord Hari, he attains liberation. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, quoting the Mahabharata written by the great sage Vyasa, that lord Krishna, even though he was the King of Dwaraka, he preferred the company of Pandavas because while living in this samsara, they constantly remembered Lord Krishna.
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2. The understanding in four Vedas, the aim of six shastras [schools of philosophy] and the glories sung by eighteen puranas are pointing towards that Lord Hari. Just as butter is the essence of churning curds, in the same way, let the Name of Lord Hari, which is the essence of all scriptures, dance on your tongue and abandon all vain stories. That Lord Hari, who is the essence of all scriptures, is the same atman existing in Jiva and Siva. Therefore don't engage your mind in difficult paths but in Lord Hari along. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, "I chant the name of Lord Hari, who is Vaikuntha Himself. I see Him everywhere, just like in the rainy season, dark clouds hover everywhere."
 3. Whatever we see in this whole world through our limited senses is ephemeral or non-essential, which is constituted of the three qualities of Maya: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. There is an eternal substratum behind this constantly changing world which is beyond the three gunas. Discrimination between the permanent and impermanent is cultivated by chanting the name of Lord Hari. Without remembering Lord Hari, our mind is engaged in useless discussion, whether the Lord is with form or formless, with attributes or attribute less. You should worship that Lord Hari, from where the movable and immovable creation come to exist. Though Paramatma is birthless, deathless, formless and unmanifest, He manifests through His Yoga Maya for the protection of virtuous and establishment of righteousness. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says that to realise Lord Rama and Lord Krishna in one's own heart in a deep state of meditation is a result of meritorious deeds accumulated in many previous lives.

4. There is no devotion without rising exclusive Love [Bhava] within, towards Paramatma and no liberation without extreme devotion and no use of boasting strength without physical fitness. How can God immediately be pleased with an extroverted person, who is constantly engaged in prohibited activities? He should refrain himself from mundane activities which create agitations and tiredness of the mind. By whose assurance do people, endeavour themselves day and night in unnecessary activities and refrain from worshipping Lord Hari, who is the remover of all sorrows. This indeed is a great wonder!!! Jnaneshwar Maharaj instructs us to cut asunder the barrier of samsara by reciting Lord Hari's name.
5. None can attain Absolute Perfection by performing rituals, rites, practising the eightfold path of yoga and following scriptural injunctions such as do's and don'ts. These unnecessarily become the cause of pride. No doubt, there is no God Realisation without devotion and no experience of Oneness of individual jiva and Brahman, without a Guru. No one can attain supernatural powers without austerity. No one can get anything from anyone without sharing something in return. Who will tell a secret without any gain? Jnaneshwar Maharaj reveals that secret, with his own experience. Association of saints is the best means to cross over the countless births and deaths in the vast ocean of samsara.
6. A Realized master's teaching does not only remain at the intellectual level but it becomes meaningful in a seekers life. A seeker feels a homogeneous experience in his present life. It means that the aspirant gives up his wrong and false identification with the mind, body and intellect, and becomes one with Brahman through the teachings of the master. Burning a bright flame of camphor removes the darkness instantly, without leaving any trace of its existence, the flame disappears along with the camphor. In the same way, the flame of the great statement, Tattvamasi [that thou art], uttered by the preceptor removes the darkness of ignorance and the flame of knowledge also goes away with it. Then what only remains is unconditional Absolute Brahman, which is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. One who comes under the guidance of a great saint, he becomes a devotee of Lord Hari. He reaches the door of emancipation and reaches the pinnacle of life. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, "I am very fond of the company of saints. Because of their grace and blessings, I see Lord Hari everywhere, in all beings, from mankind to plant kingdom and also in me."

Memories of our Gurudev



Website:

<http://www.swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org/>