

THE VOICE from BEYOND THE VOID



Words of Gururajji

Any thought if translated into action becomes dangerous. However much we may day dream and indulge in the thought, if it does not result in action and gets aborted, a frustration builds up around the thought and its power gets diminished. That is why, the more we struggle and fight every time a sensuous thought comes, even though we may get defeated, so long as we keep up the fight, the will power will become stronger and stronger and one day the will power will be able to assert its supremacy. It is a long process. So if prayer and surrender is added to the fight, the result will be quicker. So at the outset start from the senses and control their outgoing tendencies; because we cannot control the mind at the outset. Whatever the mind desires is put into action by the senses. So when the mind sees that whatever it desires is aborted by the senses being controlled and not put into action, the mind will automatically become quiescent. But this will be temporary. Ultimately we have to go to mind control.

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Truth is to be attained in silence by the introverted mind. That is what is to be done. Otherwise we will be lost in the jungle of words. Mind is a non-existing entity. It can only take us downwards. Because thoughts good or bad, both lead to action. To reap the fruits of each action, whether good or bad, results in another birth and so on, a chain.

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

Special Article Series: The Mind

Compilation from various sources

Insights of Spiritual Masters in the recent centuries such as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa along with those of our Guruji, Swami Shantananda Puri have been compiled and presented on a topic of spiritual significance. This month's article is on "the Mind".

Our humble gratitude to Sri Ramanasramam and Sri Ramakrishna Mission for granting permission to reproduce content from their publications in our newsletters.

Bhagavan says, "It is the mind that stands between and veils our happiness. Real peace is happiness. Pleasures do not form happiness."

Bhagavan explains various methods to purify the mind and reach to the real peace and happiness.

Turning the mind inward: The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems. Turning the mind inward, is done by practice and dispassion and that succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time; then she takes a bit; but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself; and she slips away; on being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall; finally even if let loose she would not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

Dealing with the mind's restlessness: If the mind is restless on account of a sense of the imperfect and unsatisfactory character of what befalls us or what is committed or omitted by us, then it is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free-will by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the All-wise and All-powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burdens and gives us peace.

Dispassion and Concentration: Mentally take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let such interest be all-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (vairagya) and concentration. God or mantra may be chosen. The mind gains strength to grasp the subtle and merge into it.

God, Guru and introversion of the mind: On the devotee surrendering, God shows His mercy by manifesting as the Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and He is the Self. This leads to introversion of the mind and finally to realisation. Effort is necessary up to the state of realisation.

Bhagavan says, Happiness will not be complete until the Self spontaneously becomes evident. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.

One of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna asked him: "But the mind is not under my control."

Sri Ramakrishna replied: "How is that? There is such a thing as abhyasayoga, yoga through practice. Keep up the practice and you will find that your mind will follow in whatever direction you lead it. The mind is like a white cloth just returned from the laundry. It will be red if you dip it in red dye and blue if you dip it in blue. It will have whatever colour you dip it in."

In the words of Swamiji Shantananda Puri [in commentary on Upadesa Saram by Bhagavan]:

Actually speaking, getting rid of the mind once and for all is the direct sadhana to be achieved. For this purpose, we may do chanting of mantras, praying to the Lord to remove the vasanas, especially the vasana of the body which takes the form of 'I'. One could daily practice trying to sit without a thought but all these things ultimately end in annihilation of the mind and all desires and 'I' thought, etc. By thus nullifying the mind, we come to the final state, namely God realisation. It directly comes by the annihilation of the mind.

When the mind through constant practice gets completely destroyed forever all thoughts including the 'I' thought, namely the ego dies. When the individuality called 'I' is gone, the universal Self alone remains and that is the stage of moksha.

When the mind is once for all destroyed, then the person is considered as one of the best of yogis. When once the mind is lost forever, all the thoughts go, all thoughts include the ego which also goes. When the ego goes, when the mind is empty of thoughts [one reaches a thoughtless state], then the 'I' is the state where we remain in our own natural state. Such a person having attained his natural state there is nothing left for him to lose in this world.

When the mind becomes void, our entire ego will be gone.

When once all the self is withdrawn from all perceptions of the outside world, then, the mind is concentrated on the Self alone. Then we remain as the witness without any objects and this is the direct vision of the Ultimate Reality.



Aradhana day memories—21 September 2016 at Guru Bhoomi



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). 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.” The previous newsletter had the first six abhangs from the English translation of Haripatha. The translation has been reproduced with permission of Mr. Subhash Maharaj Gethe. The current newsletter has eight abhangs 7-14 and the subsequent newsletters will carry the rest of the translation of Haripatha.

7. Those who are non-devotees do indelible sins which accumulate as a colossal mountain. Non-devotees are those in whose life there is no trace of devotion towards the Lord. Indeed, they are fallen. How can an unfortunate wretch worship Lord Hari? How can Lord Krishna be pleased with them, who are incessantly gossiping? Jnaneshwar Maharaj speaks from his own experience about that Omnipresent Paramatma who is the treasure of all happiness and completely and equally exists in all.

8. A spiritual seeker realises God very soon by keeping his mind in the association of saints. To recite Rama and Krishna verbally is the intrinsic nature of the individual jiva. Lord Siva also chants the name of Rama. The duality of bondage does not bind the one who single mindedly chants the Lord’s name, thus becoming free from all worldly afflictions. Lord Vishnu’s devotees have effortlessly tasted the immortal sweetness of His Name and is the same experience which exalted Yogis have attained through their vigorous yogic practices, by withdrawing all senses from sense objects and abiding in the Self. Deep and loving utterances of the Lord’s name has made wonderful inner transformation in the early life of Prahalada and sincere seekers like Uddhava were also privileged to become disciples of the venerated world Guru, Lord Krishna; who was very generous in imparting Knowledge to both Prahalada and Uddhava who possessed extreme Love for Paramatma. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says that to chant the Lord’s name is a very easy way to reach the Supreme Lord but at the same time it is very difficult to find such a rare soul who knows the Infinite Power of the Lord’s name.

9. Intellectual knowledge is futile in whose life there is no japa of Lord Vishnu and whose mind does not revel in Rama and Krishna. One who does not know the path of Advaita, non-duality, his birth itself becomes meaningless. Then, how can he abide in Rama and Krishna? Without the proper guidance of a Realized Master, how can one maintain his life in nama sadhana? How can sense of duality be swept away in one’s life? How can proper knowledge take place in one’s life? Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, “I am silent about world matters, constantly chanting the Lord’s Name and meditating on saguna (with divine form and attributes) form of Paramatma. Nama smarana, meditation and

mouna / silence are very necessary for Realisation of the Lord.

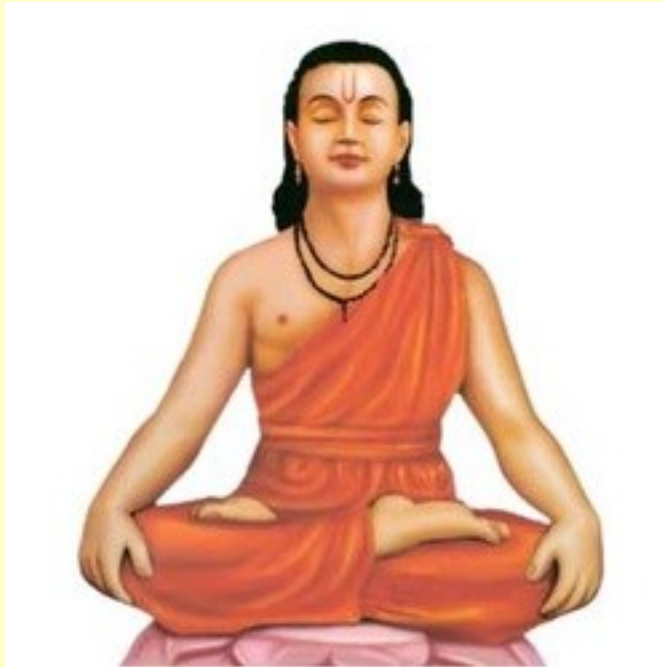
10. If the mind does not abide in the contemplation on the Name of the Lord, then bathing in the confluence of the three sacred rivers and wandering in various places of pilgrimage is futile. That man is a sinner whose mouth is devoid of chanting the Name of Lord Hari. Who will immediately rush, except Lord Hari to protect one from calamities? The great famous sage Valmiki, composer of Ramayana, has proclaimed that all inhabitants of the three worlds can attain liberation by chanting the Lord's name. Jnaneshwar Maharaj lovingly requests people to recite the Name of Lord Hari, by which all their kith and kin and whole stream of progeny will become purified.

11. Countless heaps of sin disappears within a fraction of a moment, by the utterance of name of Lord Hari. By the touch of fire, blades of grass are engulfed in flames and burnt. Everything becomes fire, so too, there never remains a trace of sin by chanting the Name of Lord Hari. Thus one's entire life becomes extremely pure by remembering the Lord. Recitation of Lord Hari is a very powerful mantra by which fear of affliction of ghosts go away. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, "My Lord Hari is so great, even Upanishads could not reveal His Glory completely."

12. Visiting holy places, observing vows, following particular disciplines and acquiring super-natural powers become obstacles without pure devotion of the Lord. Lord Hari is easily realised through pure devotion, just as an amla [gooseberry] fruit on the palm of one's hand. To put a lot of effort for the Realisation of God by various means without devotion, is just like picking up scattered, miniscule, slippery particles of mercury. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says that his reverential and honourable Guru Saint Nivrittinath Maharaj who has blessed him with Immortal Knowledge, which was handed down through his Guru parampara.

13. Total absorption of the mind in Lord Hari is Samadhi, which is the highest state of realisation. This is the complete identification of a jiva with Paramatma. Please understand that one cannot attain this highest state of realisation without removing the sense of duality within the intellect. There is no greatness of intellect other than realisation of God. All supernatural powers exist in Lord Kesava only. This is one of the names of Lord Krishna, which means one who has long hair, or "Ka" means Brahma / Creator and "Eshava" means Shiva / Destroyer. All supernatural powers manifest in one's life who realises God. All worldly prosperities, eightfold supernatural powers of Yogis and nine kinds of wealth of Kubera, become obstacles to those whose mind does not abide in the Supreme Bliss of Paramatma. Satisfaction personified becomes itself satisfied, having taken refuge at the Lotus Feet of Jnaneshwar Maharaj, who is constantly contemplating on Lord Hari.

14. The Lord of Death, cannot even glance at him, who chants regularly the name of Lord Hari, with sincere dedication and ardent devotion. Infinite results of penance are equal to one sincere utterance of Rama and Krishna, influenced by which a pack of sins are swept away swiftly. Whoever chants the name of Hari, liberation is certain for him; even Lord Siva also chants the mantra, HARI-HARI-HARI. Jnaneshwar Maharaj says, "I always recite the name of Lord Narayana, who is the abode of all beings. Likewise you too can attain the highest state of realisation, from where there is no return to the cycle of birth and death of samsara.



Handwritten notes of Guruji

While Swamiji was in mounam in 2003

To reach the state beyond time and space can also be done by meditating one pointedly on the Lord or by chanting of the mantra.

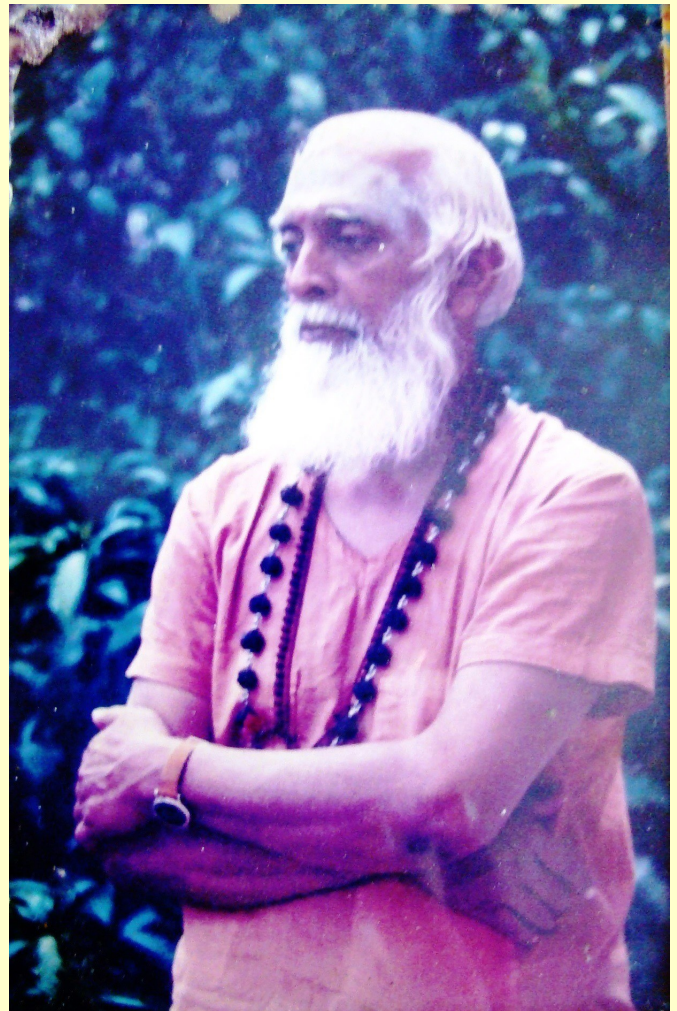
Whatever the path we adopt, in whatever state (laughing, weeping, dreaming) – BE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF 'THE PRESENCE' (the presence of that Supreme Lord) in the Heart or inside us or both inside and outside (like in the Aura of the Lord). THE ONE AND ONLY KEY TO REALISATION – NEVER NEVER CEASE REMEMBERING THE LORD OR CEASE FEELING HIS PRESENCE (when you remember Him, HE is present).

In order to have ceaseless remembrance, again and again PRAY TO HIM: "Lord, I do not ask you much – please bestow only unceasing remembrance of you. I tend to forget you often in the day. Please protect me from such lapses. Lord I am helpless. Only you can help me."

Many of the modern Guru's have given people an idea that all that is required is to abandon the past and future and to remain in the present, i.e. the Pure Consciousness. You may

try the method for thousands of years and you won't succeed in quelling the thoughts relating to the past or the future. The thoughts have a deep base of conditioning not only due to involvement in worldly life in this birth but all the births in the past. Unless sadhana is done and life is modelled to a somewhat austere basis leaving sex, money and all desires, you can't wish off all the thoughts in a trice and focus on the consciousness alone, except in respect of very very rare people (one in several thousands) who might have reached a higher stage of evolution in the past births. It is essential for one to have constant remembrance of the Lord by japa or by just remembering him constantly, by prayers, by developing Love and Devotion to the Lord, by seeking Satsang and reading standard books of teachings of saints, we have to work for the realisation. But ultimately the Grace descends on us, envelops us and uplifts us to the final ecstasy.

Lord, give me intense LOVE towards you and detachment from all worldly objects and reveal yourself to me as and when and if it pleases you. As for myself, LOVING YOU and YOU ALONE is sufficient.



Letter to a Devotee - November 2013

Written by Swami Shantananda

[Following is a letter dated 08 November 2013 written by Swamiji to a devotee while he was in Sri Ramanasramam].

My dear

May the Supreme Lord's blessings be on you always. The Grace of the Lord works through the Guru. God will not allow me to forget my disciples. The communication through the cell phone is not necessarily to convey the thoughts. It also serves the purpose of keeping a subtle connection alive through such gross means too.

When once you become aware that the present routine life of looking after the child and the husband is not the summum bonum of our life and there is something far more valuable than all that, which is the very purpose of human life, you have already started on the path well enough. All the various missions, even though they do a great work for the spiritual progress of our country, they are mainly missionaries at heart and their purpose is to recruit. They are trained to talk alluringly to people in a way it appeals to them. Reality may not however appeal to us but it is the living and loving goal.

Initially we have to love God in our heart only and ignore the world thoroughly. If we were to fool ourselves into thinking that if we love the world it would lead to God, it will only entangle us irretrievably in the maya all the more. As per Ramakrishna, treat the tiger or the elephant, as a tiger, etc. and keep a distance. Loving the world will come automatically when we evolve by merging with the Supreme Lord. Yes, do not hate anybody nor get attached to anybody. You have no duty to children, husband, etc. Your first and only duty is to realise God. It does not mean that you should neglect your family. Do your duties without attachment. Attachment should be only to God. With the grace of the Guru and the God, the goal can be achieved easily. But there is no use of having multiple Guru's. A moksha Guru can be only one.



Even if he turns out to be useless and a ruffian, in the name of the Guru the Lord himself takes over your spiritual progress and so you need not be afraid. Remember that I was a common ignorant person when I started on the path with nobody either in the family or outside to guide me. I was also a full householder for 32 years with tight office work, with worldly people [posing as if they were interested in God] around me. It was the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna which was my only Guru for years. All the great mahatmas were all common men till they realised themselves. Simply going to mahatmas once in a way and having a spiritual retreat for 2 or 3 days will not do. One should study some scriptures at least Bhagwad Gita. Sweet words of mahatmas alone are of no use. We have to do either japa or meditation everyday without fail. All pujas and formal worship are to keep the house [heart] clean and they will not lead to moksha directly.

But for getting rid of our vasanas and our ego to a large extent, doing recitation of the thousand names of the Lord, doing pujas, etc. are very necessary. But our pujas are only mechanical and we do not merge in it with our full emotion. Whatever we do on the spiritual side is mostly nominal while we do our worldly duties to our son, etc. with all heart and soul.

Anyway, may the Divine Mother's grace be fully on you all and whatever can be done by me [as a Guru who is contacted once in a blue moon] will be done.

Finally everybody, being an indivisible part of the one Supreme Being has to reach the Lord and merge with Him one day or other in this birth or subsequent ones. Nobody will be abandoned.

The Kalpaga tree grants all your desires but you can't express your desires sitting in your home. You have to go and stand under the tree and then express your desires. This is your effort. God is the Kalpaga tree.

With all love and blessings to all

Shantandanda



Memories of our Gurudev



From Handwritten notes of Swamiji in 2004 during Mounam—Tips for Sadhana

Note 1: Constant Remembrance of the Lord

One small bite of an ant is sufficient to take the mind away to the place of the bite. Unless we have practiced taking the name of the Lord at all times, while eating and walking, there is no guarantee that at the last moment you will remember Him. We tell our prayers and start eating. For every morsel of rice and vegetables we eat [it may be 20-30 times in a lunch] we should take His name and eat; lest our attention should turn to the taste of the food and forget Him.

In hotels, the vibrations of so many cooks have entered cooked food. So every time a dish comes during the course of lunch, purify it by taking God's name and eat. Thus, the practice to take the name at all times is essential.

Note 2: Indulgence in thoughts

The more we indulge in any thought, it gets deeply entrenched. If we think for a second and leave, it does no harm. The continuity of thought on one subject is dangerous.

Note 3: Getting rid of sensuous desires

Whenever a sensuous feeling touches our senses, withdraw it like a tortoise withdrawing itself into the shell. But my own feeling is that if we have a competent and realised Guru, invoking His grace invokes the strength to bear.

Secondly, taking the name of the Lord at such times continuously will make the feeling subside.

So many methods are there. I had never found any one as effective as the above mentioned.

Even those who may not have a competent Guru, if they have absolute faith in the Guru, that is enough.

Website:

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