

॥ Shri Hari ॥

Art of Living in the World



Tvameva Maata Cha Pita Tvameva
Tvameva Bandhusha Sakhaa Tvameva
Tvameva Vidyaa Dravinam Tvameva
Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva

Swami Ramsukhdas

Art of Living in the World

A point has come to my mind that if we learn how to live in the world, we can achieve salvation. To live in the world is an art. If we understand that art and also put it to use, we are relieved of the worldly distress once and for all! Whatever work you engage in, you must have the know-how for performing that work. For example if someone cooks food, but does not know how to cook, then the meal will not be prepared well. **Therefore to perform any activity, there are two things required - knowledge and action. Both are essential.**

So what is that art of living in this world? Suppose there is a man who has parents, brothers, sisters, wife and sons etc., then he relates with all of them for their well-being and benefit, for giving them comfort, without having the least desire for his own comfort. If he desires his own comfort and happiness, then so far he has not learned the art of living in the world. When you live in the family, you serve the members of the family. But when you go out, you don't serve others, rather you take service from others. When someone gives us directions, helps us, gives us place to stay, provides us water, and other amenities our journey is made comfortable. **In this way by expecting service from others, we can't be relieved of the worldly distresses and can't attain benediction.**

If we wish anything from others, we become dependent. This is an established principle. But if we don't wish anything from anyone, then we become independent. Wishing and wanting anything from the world means dependence on the world, and fulfilling the wish of the world means independence. Therefore let us not hold on to our wants and wishes, and fulfill the righteous wants (wishes) of others according to our power and ability, then we will become independent.

Now the question may arise why should we fulfill the wishes of others, if we don't wish for anything from them? The answer is that by fulfilling the wishes of others, we get the power to renounce our wishes/desires. **If we continue to be engaged in fulfilling our selfish interests only, then the power of renouncing our wishes will be destroyed and we will become completely dependent. We will take a fall.** However, by continuing to help and serve, we will become independent. While living in the world, we will rise above worldly matters i.e we will attain salvation.

Lord says in the Gita –

**Ihaiva tairjitah sargo yehaam saamyē sthitam manah |
Nirdosham hi samam brahma tasmaad brahmani te sthitaah | |
(Gita 5/19)**

Even here (in the mortal plane), the whole world is conquered by those whose minds are established in equanimity; since the absolute is free from blemish and is established in equanimity, therefore it becomes merged (established) in the eternal (Gita 5/19).

Those whose minds have become steady in a state of equanimity, have conquered the world in this life time. Now the question arises - what is the state of equanimity? The state of equanimity means not to feel happy or dejected by favorable or unfavorable acquisition. There should be neither pleasure nor pain. If we remain steady in all circumstances, it means we are victorious. But if the desirable and undesirable circumstances affect us and make us agitated, it means we are not there yet. When will they not affect us? They will not affect us, if we don't live in the world for ourselves, but we live for the world. By living like this we shall get beyond this world.

We have got this body, power, ability and understanding etc., from our parents. Therefore, without any selfish motive, we

should utilize these things to serve them. We have to live not for us, but only for them. If we don't live for ourselves, their good or bad behavior will not affect us. Our sentiment should only be - We are here to serve them, to give them comfort, to make them happy, to do good to them and to relieve them of the worldly distresses.

Question - *If we serve others, but they give us trouble, what should we do?*

Answer - If they give us trouble, we shall attain the state of benediction very quickly. By serving others, there is renunciation and we attain the state of benediction, while the troubles inflicted by others destroy our sins. The destruction of the sins purifies the inner faculties. Thus we are doubly benefited. Our duty is to give comfort to others and to satisfy their needs, not to get comfort and to satisfy our desires. **In order to satisfy others desires, two points are important. The first is that their needs/ desires are virtuous and the second is that they are within our power to satisfy.** If their desire is just, but it is not within our power to satisfy it, we should express our inability and ask for pardon. But if we have got the power, we should satisfy their desire.

Question - On doing so we will be unhappy!

Swamiji - We will become unhappy only when we desire something from them and they won't do it. If we desire nothing from them, then how will we become unhappy? We are simply here because of their happiness. It is only for their comfort and relaxation that we are here. Therefore our work is only to make them happy.

Question - What if they cause us to pain and sorrow?

Swamiji - If they cause us pain and suffering then we will very quickly attain salvation. If we serve them and they give us sorrow, then it will be twice as beneficial. One is that by serving without a desire for anything in return, renunciation will take place and secondly, when they give us pain and suffering then our sins will be destroyed, by which the previous impurities in our inner faculties will be purified. And if we serve them with a spirit of selflessness, then new impurities will not arise in the inner faculty. **Therefore find out how others can become happiness. It is not our duty to desire something for ourselves. Our duty is to satisfy their needs. To fulfill their needs, two things must be kept in mind - 1) the other person's needs are righteous, and 2) we are capable of fulfilling them. But if fulfilling it is beyond our capability, then fold your hands and apologize to him that "I am not capable, I do not have the strength, therefore please forgive me."** If you are capable then fulfill the person's wishes. This is the way to live in this world.



Thus live in the world like a lotus leaf. Unlike a piece of cloth, the leaves of a lotus plant, doesn't get wet. Water droplets simply stay on the surface, without getting soaked in. In the same way if we live in the world not for us, but for others, then we too like the lotus leaf will not get tainted i.e. we will not get entangled in the world. Therefore live in this world only to serve others. Whatever we have received from others, continue to give back to them, and do not desire anything in return. In this way **by serving**

others we shall get out of our old debt and by not desiring anything from them, new debts will not arise. On the other hand if we don't serve them, we shall continue to be indebted to them and if we continue to desire something from them, then we shall run into new debt.

When a man dies we grieve. For this grieving, there are two reasons. The first is that we have taken happiness and comfort from him and not given him happiness and comfort. And secondly, we had hoped to get happiness and comfort from him. If we had not taken happiness and comfort from him, then we would not be grieving on his death. When there is no affinity at all with a person, then we do not grieve on his death. Just as when a 90-100 year old man dies, then we do not feel so much grief. Some have even said that his death is like a wedding (reason to rejoice). Now what is the reason for this? That now there is no hope of gaining any happiness or comfort from him. One does not aspire within as to the kind of comfort he will provide, the benefits he will provide. However when a 20-25 year old youthful man dies, then one grieves a lot; because there was hope of gaining happiness and comfort from him. This hope itself is the main reason for sorrow –

**Aashaa hi param dukham nairaashyam param sukham |
(Srimadbhaagavat 11/8/44)**

Have no desire from them and simply attempt to fulfill their needs. By not desiring and wishing from them, there will not be any sorrow on their death. Just as when someone became very ill at the age of fifteen, and at the age of 25 all the doctors said that he will not live much longer. He will surely die. Since we have been serving him for the past ten years, and have not taken anything from him, nor is there any hope of taking anything from him, then on his death, there will not be much pain and sorrow, as the sorrow does not come from his dying. Sorrow is the fruit of our desiring and wanting something from him.

Live in the world, but do not desire any happiness from it, rather **only give happiness. Keep on serving, but within our selves, simply eradicate all desire to take anything, then we will learn the art of living in this world. We will be freed from all bondage! Desire to take anything, that itself is bondage. Our intellect has turned upside down, because we think that we shall be happy, if we are served. By being served by others, we will become indebted to them, then how can we become happy? A sinful man can become free, but one who is in debt cannot be freed.** A sinful man can repent for his sins, or suffer the consequences of his actions, than he will be freed from his sins. But he who is in debt or one who has committed a crime against another, will only be freed when the other forgives him. Thus as long as we remain in debt in this world, till then we cannot attain salvation. **Therefore serve selflessly from those that we have either taken service from or desire service from, than we will become free of debts.**

***Question** - Those who we serve will become indebted to us.*

***Swamiji** -* No they will not become indebted. We are serving them with a disinterested spirit (selflessly), and in return we desire to take nothing from them at all, then how can they become indebted? Secondly, that which we have acquired if we do not consider it as ours, rather consider it as belonging to them and thus putting it to use for serving them, then how can they become indebted? Therefore serving in this manner, they will not become indebted to us, and we will become free of all debts. We will be liberated.

If a shopkeeper wants to go out of business then what does he do? Whatever he has taken from others, he returns to them, and what others have taken from him, if they return it, so be it, and if not then let it be. By doing so, he will be able to close his shop. If he desires to collect everything that has been taken from him, then it will be difficult to close the shop, as there will continue to be something or the other remaining to be taken from

others. Therefore as long as we don't leave the business of taking, till then the shop doors cannot be closed forever. Similarly, as long as we do not stop taking from this world, till then we cannot become free of debts, we cannot become liberated. Therefore simply **stop this business of taking from others, once and for all, and begin to give and only give to all.** Give to mother and father, wife and son, both and brother-in-law, husband, mother and father-in-law, sister-in-law and sister and all other relations. Give to all, serve all, but do not take anything from them. **Wherever there is desire to take, there you will be trapped!** There is a story - "Need makes father out of a donkey." By wanting to take, by having a need, man falls so low that he has to even become a slave to a donkey! If there is no desire to take, then we cannot be a slave even to God.

There is one unique point, listen carefully! We become devotees of God, but we do not become slaves. But when do we stop becoming slaves? When we don't want anything. Even from God. **Those who desire to take nothing from God for such devotees God says - "mein to hu bhagatanko daas, bhagat mere mukutmani."** "I am servant of the Lord, and my devotee is my crown jewel."

The Lord has said in Gita that there are four types of devotees - **"Aarto jijnasurarthaaarthee jnaani ca"** i.e. the seeker of wealth, the afflicted, those who have quest of knowledge and the wise (Jnaani or premi) Of these four the jnaani (premi) is best of all. To that "jnaani bhakt", I am most loving and he too is most loving to Me. All four devotees are extremely generous; however a "jnaani bhakt" i.e. one who has surrendered to the Lord is my very own Self (Gita 7/17-18). The reason is that "jnaani bhakt" (man of wisdom, a devotee that has taken refuge in the Lord) does not desire anything from Me. The other three desire something or the other from God, as there is no shortage in God's kingdom! He can provide wealth. He can remove one's sorrows! He can give Essential knowledge of Truth! He has total ability to give; but such devotees are a rarity.



God says I will continue to give, I will give you what you do not have and I will protect that which you already have - **"Yogkshemam vahaamyaham"** (Gita 9/22); however do not express your want - **"Niryogkshem aatmavaan bhav"** (Gita 2/45). What a extra-ordinary point this is! By not wanting, love manifests; but by wanting there is no love; rather there is bondage. He desires from the other, and the other desires from him, than both are cheats. There is no cheating among two cheats. By wanting from the world, is going towards cheating. Therefore one has to give up wanting and simply serve. This is the means to live in this world.

All you brothers and sisters live in your house as if you are a traveler. Just like a gentleman who is traveling visits you and stays overnight, and says to you - you all have dinner, thereafter, whatever remains I will consume. You sleep in your favorite places within your house, and I will take up some ordinary spot that is not occupied. Whatever useful clothes that are there, you wear, and the ordinary ones, give them to me as it will be useful for my sustenance. However at night if the house catches on fire, if a thief-robber breaks in, if some difficulty arises, if there is an outbreak of some disease, then I will be the first to serve. His sentiments remain that he has taken the homeowner's food and water, he has rested and relaxed here, therefore he must serve

them, he must help them as it is his duty. If the traveler does his work completely, but takes nothing, then he will not be bound. As morning arises, he will walk away. However, if he desires to take, then he will be trapped. Therefore gentlemen! Serve! Whatever food-water is taken, is taken only to serve; because if food and water are not taken, then how will we serve?

One of our aged saints used to say, that one must live in the world like a rubber ball, not like a lump of clay. The rubber balls, keeps bouncing around, it does not get stuck anywhere. However the lump of clay, gets stuck there and then. If man remains in this world, only to serve, not for himself then he will not get stuck in this world, He will be freed. This is the art of living in this world.

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