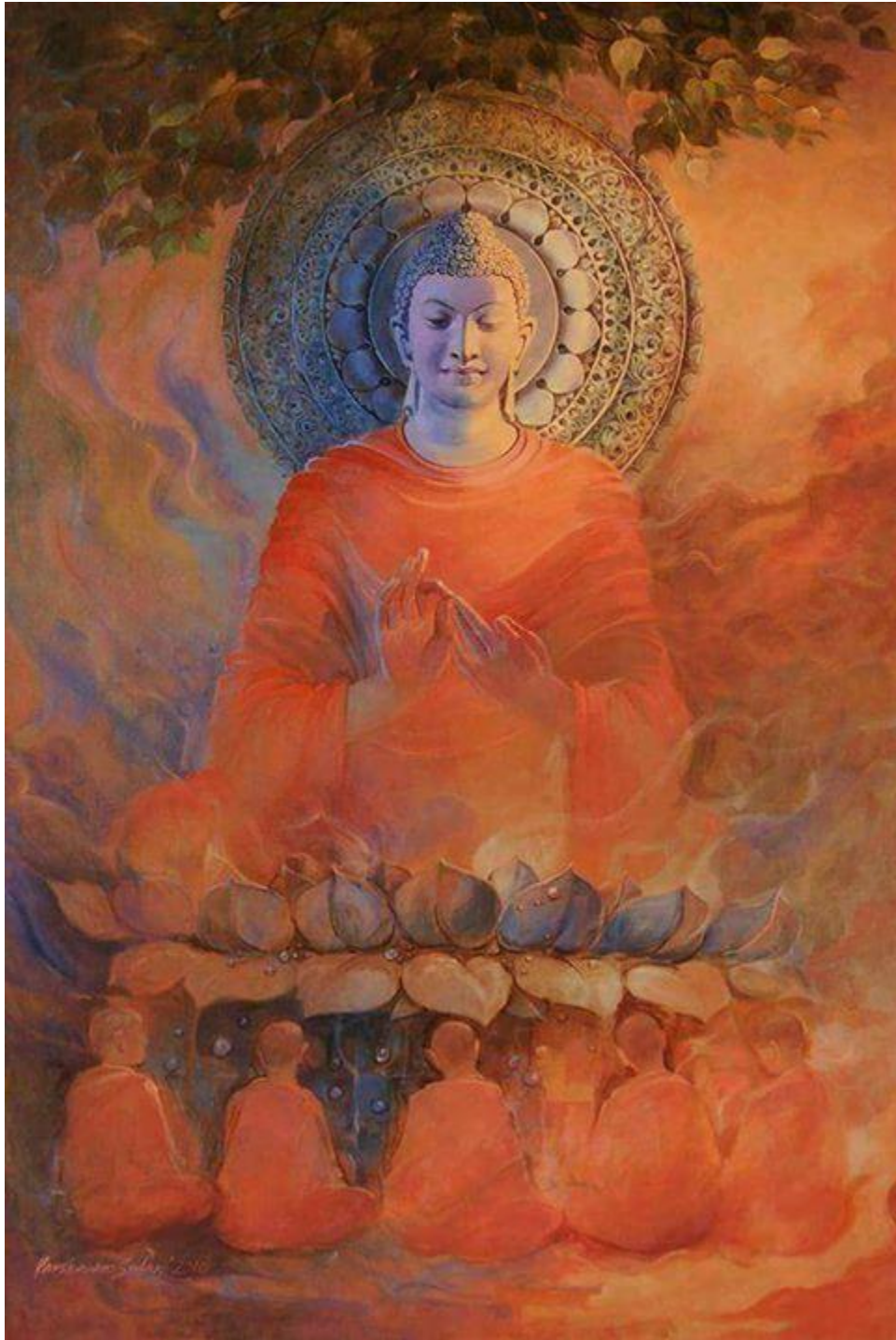


|| Shri Hari ||

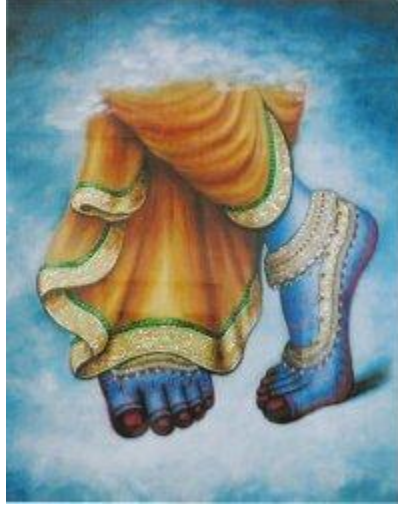
16. Invaluable Advice for Aspirants



Swami Ramsukhdas

|| Shri Hari ||

Invaluable Advice for Aspirants



tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvameva |
tvameva vidyā dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva ||

Swami Ramsukhdas

|| Shri Hari ||

Invaluable Advice for Aspirants



An aspirant who wants to follow '*Karmayoga*' (Path of Action), should first accept 'I am a Yogi'. He who wants to follow '*Jnanayoga*' (Path of Knowledge), he should hold 'I have a quest to know, I am a seeker of knowledge. He who wants to follow '*Bhaktiyoga*' (Path of Devotion), should accept 'I am a devotee'. It means that a striver should practise spiritual discipline by becoming a Yogi or by becoming a seeker of knowledge or by becoming a devotee.

He who practises spiritual discipline by becoming a Yogi, should not be satisfied till he attains Yoga (equanimity). Yoga means equanimity - '*samatvam yog ucchyate*' (Gita 2/38). Dualities (pairs of opposites) such as attachment-aversion, joy-sorrow etc., are the obstacles to an aspirant in

becoming a yogi. Therefore an aspirant should have the aim to root out attachment-aversion. An action is performed with two aims - to reap the fruit and to renounce the desire for fruit. He who performs an action by renouncing the desire for fruit is a '*Karmayogi*'. Therefore an aspirant following '*Karmayoga*' should hold, 'I am a Yogi, therefore it is not my aim to reap the fruit of action.' Therefore he should perform his duty by renouncing attachment to the fruit of action.* He should make the proper use of the favorable and the unfavorable circumstances instead of being happy and sad, pleased and displeased with them. The proper use of the favorable circumstances is to use them to serve others and the proper use of unfavorable circumstances is to renounce the desire for favorable circumstances. The proper use of both the favorable and unfavorable circumstances becomes the cause of wiping out attachment and aversion.

Every action has its affinity with the external (non-self), rather than the self. The reason is that in the self there is no deficiency (shortage). Therefore the self needs nothing. When the self needs nothing, there is no question for the aspirant to do any action for himself. Secondly the sense organs with which actions are performed, belong to *Prakriti* (Nature). As the self has no affinity with *Prakriti*, so an aspirant (the self) has no responsibility to perform any action at all for himself. Therefore the person who performs actions for himself is bound by actions - '*yagyaaarthaakarmanonyatra lokoyam karmabandhanh*' (Gita 3/9). But he who instead of performing actions for himself, performs them for others, is liberated from the bondage of actions - '*yagyayaachartah karma samagram praveeliyate.*' (Gita 4/23) . The actions which are performed as sacrifice i.e. for others, without any interested motive, are called '*yagnaartha karma*'. Such aspirants who perform actions in a

disinterested manner (as sacrifice), attain 'Yoga' (equanimity) as the result of eating the remnants of the sacrifice and also attain to the Eternal Absolute -

yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo, mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ (Gita 3/13)

Yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam (Gita 4/31)

'I am a Yogi', 'I am a seeker of knowledge (I have quest to know), 'I am a devotee' 'I am a striver' - this is not an aspirant's physical body, but it is 'Bhāva Sharir' (emotional body). The physical (gross) body is not a Yogi, nor a seeker of knowledge, nor a devotee. If an aspirant from the outset holds 'I am not worldly, I am an aspirant' he will progress speedily in his spiritual practice. As at the time of wedding, a boy becomes the bridegroom, then his manners change. The reason is that he changes his egoism that he is the bridegroom. Similarly an aspirant by changing his egoism should feel that he is a spiritual aspirant, not a worldly man. If he holds that he is worldly, he will perform the worldly work promptly and efficiently, but his spiritual discipline will not be practiced efficiently. The change in egoism makes the work very easy. Therefore it is very essential for an aspirant to change his egoism. The aspirant who does not practice spiritual discipline by becoming a servant or a person with a quest to know, or a devotee. Though his spiritual discipline does not go in vain yet he does not attain the aim at present. Therefore he who wants to practice the spiritual discipline, should hold 'I am a spiritual aspirant', 'I am a *Karmayogi*', 'I am a *Jnanayogi*' or 'I am a *Bhaktiyogi*' and then he should practice the spiritual discipline.

Karmayoga is also named 'service'. Therefore an aspirant who follows 'the path of action' by changing his egoism, should accept 'I am a servant'.

By this egoism he will hold 'Being a servant it is my duty to serve others without expecting any reward.' Therefore for an aspirant it is important that he has to serve others without any selfish motive, without any desire for fruit. He who wants worldly pleasures or happiness or comfort for himself, is not a servant indeed.* An aspirant may follow any path, he will have to abandon his own comfort and pleasure. An aspirant has to practice spiritual discipline, he is not to enjoy pleasures. A pleasure seeker is not a spiritual aspirant. A pleasure seeker is a diseased person rather than a Yogi. A pleasure seeker has to suffer, he can't escape sufferings.

A servant is he who renders service everytime. Whatever he does, whether he eats food or takes bath, or washes clothes or does business, he should do it with the sense of duty. But it is possible only when he has the sentiment that he is a servant. But if he holds that 'I am a man' or 'I am a *Brahmana*' 'I am a *Vaisya*'; or 'I am a householder', 'I am a recluse' etc., first and then 'I am a servant', he will not be able to perform his duty as a '*Karmayogi*' well and efficiently. A *Karmayogi* should hold 'I am a *Karmayogi*' first and then I am a man etc., Similarly he should hold first of all 'I am a devotee', 'I am a seeker of knowledge' or 'I am a spiritual aspirant'. As in a *Brahmana* (member of the priest class), the notion that he is a *Brahmana* remains aroused everytime, similarly in an aspirant the feeling 'I am an aspirant' should remain aroused all the time. By doing so, the notion that he is a man, or he is the body, is wiped out. 'I am a man' - this is the human body consisting of the five subtle elements and 'I am a spiritual aspirant' (a servant, a seeker of knowledge, or a devotee) - this is '*bhava sharir*' (the self, emotional body). When there is predominance of the '*Bhava sharir*', the spiritual discipline is practiced incessantly.

A *Karmayogi* serves the gross, the subtle and the causal - the three bodies. The service to the gross (physical) body is not to let it be pleasure seeking, indolent and inactive. The service to the subtle body is not to think of the sense-objects but to think of the happiness and welfare of all beings. The service to the causal body is to experience trance, to stick firmly to one's principle and not to deviate from the aim of salvation. An action done with the gross body, thinking (reflection) done with the subtle body and steadiness or trance experienced with the causal body - not to consider them one's own and for one's ownself, is service to them. The reason is that the gross body has its identity with the gross world, the subtle body has its identity with the subtle world and the causal body has its identity with the causal world. Therefore it is a blunder to consider the body different from the world. It is very injurious for an aspirant to consider the body 'his' and 'for him'. Such a person can't be called an aspirant in the real sense of the term, even though his whole life may pass. Therefore a *Karmayogi* should hold 'I am of the world and I am to serve the world.' In this connection there is an illustration. It is a prevalent notion among people that money makes (earns) money because those who have money, by starting new business etc., earn money. When a man heard that money earns money, he took a one rupee coin and began to wander in the market by tossing it so that it might earn more money or coins. In the market there was a heap of coins. When he tossed the coin, by chance it fell on the heap of coins. He said 'what is the matter?, it has not earned any other coin.' The shopkeeper said, 'you are right, money earns money, your coin is small (only one), while here is a heap of coins. So these coins have earned your coin. The small goes to the big, the big does not go to the small.' Similarly the world (big) is not for the body (small), but the body

is for the world. The world is not for us, but we are for the world. Therefore an aspirant should have the feeling how he should be of use to the world.

An aspirant should either purify egoism or destroy it or change it. A *Karmayogi* purifies egoism, a *Jnanayogi* destroys it and a *Bhaktiyogi* changes it. Therefore inspite of the sense of doership, an aspirant can follow the paths of action and devotion, but he can't follow the path of Knowledge. He who follows the Path of Knowledge with egoism may gain knowledge of *Jnanayog*, but he will not be able to attain salvation. In *Karmayog* and *Bhaktiyog* first desire is wiped out and then egoism perishes. In *Jnanayog* first egoism is wiped out and then desire naturally perishes. It means that the Path of Action and Devotion can be followed even by having the sense of egoism but the Path of Knowledge can't be followed by having the sense of egoism. Therefore if egoism persists, there is great difficulty in following *Jnanayog* - '*avyakta hi gatirdukkham dehavadhirvapyate*' (Gita 12/5) and when egoism is wiped out *Jnanayoga* is easily followed - '*sukhen brahmasansparshmatyantam sukhamashrute*' (Gita 6/28). But he who hankers after pleasures and prosperity and indulges in merry making, can't attain perfection by any path. Such a man can't be even an aspirant, then how can he be an enlightened soul?

A devotee does not wipe out I'ness (egoism), but changes it. It is easy to change I'ness. As a girl remains virgin before marriage and say 'I am a virgin' but afre marriage she changes I'ness and says 'I am married'. Similarly a devotee changes his I'ness by declaring 'I am not of the world, but I am God's. It is easy and also excellent to change I'ness. Having changed I'ness, an aspirant gets absorbed in God and attains perfection.

An aspirant should hold firmly that his work is not to indulge in merry-making and to nourish the body because the arrangement of his livelihood has been made in advance by God. God makes arrangement for livelihood but not for pleasures, prosperity and merry-making. There is milk in the breast of the mother first and the baby is born later. When arrangement for our livelihood has already been made by our gracious God, why should we not worship Him? Though every human being is responsible to worship God, yet old people, widows and saints, are especially responsible to worship Him. What other duty besides worshipping God do the above mentioned people have? The human life is not meant for desiring pleasures, rest and favorableness at all -

*Yahin tan kar phal vishaya na bhaayi | Swarg Svalp ant dukh daayi ||
Nar tanu paayi bishayam man dehi | palati sudha te sath bish lehin ||
(Manasa, Uttara, 44/1)*

Therefore he who hankers after pleasures, rest, honor and praise etc., can't be a spiritual aspirant. He is a pleasure seeker. Desire for honor, praise is also pleasure-seeking because the body is honored and the name is praised, but the self is neither honored nor praised. A man even after death desires praise either by writing a few books or by making a house so that people may remember him. But an aspirant should stand aloof from honour, praise, name and fame etc. because they are very risky for the striver who wants to attain God. It is also not the business of an aspirant to attain the higher worlds such as heaven etc., because from there he has to return to this mortal world full of sorrows.

'Swargau swamp ant dukhdaayi'

The Lord declares -

Na paaramesthayam na mahendradhishnyam na saarvbhoumam na rasaadhioatyam |

Na yogasidheerapunarbhavam va mayyarpitaatmecchati mad vinaanyat ||

(Srimadbha 11/14/14)

'The devotee who has surrendered himself to Me, besides Me wants neither the rank of Brahma (the creator) nor of *Indra* (the king of gods) nor the kingdom of earth, nor the kingdom of the underworld, nor all accomplishments of Yoga nor even salvation.'

This is the nature of many people that they serve other people where they are honored and praised. They can't work without honor, praise, applause and cheer. For good work or achievement they take the credit themselves and for bad work or failure they blame others. How will persons of such a mean mentality attain salvation? 'I have done all good work' - this is 'Kaikeyi mentality' and all good work has been done by others - this is "Lord Rama's mentality'. Kaikeyi declares -

Taat baat mein sakal sanvaari' | bhai manthra sahaaya bichari ||

Kachuk kaaj bidhi beech bigaareu | bhupati surapati pur pagu dhaareu ||

(Manasa, Ayodhya 160/1)

Lord Rama declares -

Guru Vashishth kulpoojya hamaare | inhi ki Kripaaun dhanuj ran maare ||

Eh sab sakha sunahu muni mere | Bhaye samar sagar kahun bere ||

Mama hit laagi janm inh haare | Bharatahu te mohi adhik piyaare ||

(Manas, Uttara, 8/3-4)

Therefore it is improper for an aspirant to work aiming at honor, praise, comfort and luxury etc.

An aspirant should firmly stick to the path which he follows without caring for pleasure or pain, praise or blame. Whatever sufferings or unfavorable circumstances we come across, are for our spiritual progress. There is a secret point in it that when our spiritual practice runs smoothly and we derive some pleasure out of it and are proud that I have become a good aspirant, then God sends unfavorable circumstances. Thus by sending favorable and unfavorable circumstances from time to time, God warns us and protects us.

I have to take nothing, but I have to give only - by thinking so, a man becomes a spiritual aspirant. If the aspirant is a servant, by serving others, his pride of being a servant will perish. i.e. instead of the servant, service will remain and then service will be identified with God. i.e. He will attain God. If the aspirant has the quest to know, his pride of his curiosity, inquiring nature will perish and then only the seeking will remain. When only the seeking remains, then that quest will be fulfilled. i.e. He will attain Self - Realization. Similarly, if the aspirant is a devotee, he will have no pride of his devotion, and he will be identified with devotion i.e. every action by him will be performed as devotion for God only. By becoming devotion itself, He will become inseparable with God.

Narayana ! Narayana ! Narayana !

From "For Salvation of Mankind" in English by Swami Ramsukhdasji

A Note to the Reader

The special quality of the original is difficult to capture in a translation. Readers are earnestly requested, that if they have the knowledge of the Hindi language, to read the original works in Hindi.

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