

Puja brings Darshan of God

By Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

What is Puja? Why Do Puja At Home? Benefit of Worship...

Puja or its alternative Pooja is a Sanskrit word, which literally means “reverence”, “honour”, “adoration” or “worship”. In colloquial Tamil, it is called “Poosai” with the same meaning.

The word has also been defined variously by other archaryas and pundits: one South Indian interpretation is, “puja” has two letters—“pa” and “ja”—“Pa” connotes “paaraayana” or ceremonial repetition of sacred texts; and “ja” stands for “japa” or recitation of His Names. In this sense, “puja” is continuous parayana and japa.

There is yet another explanation, “Pu” represents “pushpam” (=flower) and “ja” means “jaal” (=water). Hence, in “puja”, we use flowers and water in paying our respect to the Lord.

It has also been said that “puja” derives from “pu-chey”, which literally means “flower-action”, or “action performed with flowers”. This definition quite accurately describes what happens in the ceremonial act of showing reverence to God through invocation, prater, bhajan and ritual.

Sivacharyar Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji says that the Tamil letter “Pu” in “puja” signifies “the pleasures, auspiciousness and good fortunes of Bhu loka”. The letter “jai” denotes an “instrument that easily brings something to us”. Hence, “puja” is an effective but spiritual tool that brings all that we rightly deserve for living in this world. (pg. 11, Home Puja).

Why Should One Perform Puja?

His Holiness Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji explains in his celebrated book “All About worship” (pg. 105): “Puja is the common term for ritual worship, of which there are numerous synonyms such as Archana, Vandana, Bhajana, etc., though some of these stress certain aspects of it.

“The object of worship is the Ishta Devata or guiding Deity or the particular form of the Deity whom the devotee worships-Narayana or Vishnu as such, or His forms as Rama and Krishna in the case of Vaishnavas, Siva in His eight forms in the case of Saivas and Devi in the case of Saktas. The devotee selects sometimes his Kuladeva or Kuladevi, family Deva or Devi, for his worship. Sometimes, the Devata is chosen for him by his Guru or spiritual preceptor. Sometimes, he himself chooses that Devata which most appeals to him. This form is his Ishta Devata. An object is used in the outer Puja such as an image (Pratima), a picture, or an emblem such as Saligrama in the case of Vishnu worship or Linga in the case of worship of Siva.

“Whilst all things may be the objects of worship, choice is naturally made of those objects which, by reason of their effect on the mind, are more fitted for it. An image or one of the useful emblems is likely to raise in the mind of the worshipper the thought of a Devata.”

Is There a Need For an Image, Murthi, Vighraha When We Perform Puja?

“Puja”, some erudite Hindu scholars opine, is a post-Vedic Hindu practice. In Vedic times, it has been said, “Homa” or the offering of grains and sanctified liquids into sacrificial fire, was what that been in vogue.

As the texture of Man’s mind changed, archaryas had introduced a form of worship, which we today call “puja”: it differs from the Vedic sacrifice primarily in the fact, unlike the Homa, that image, vighraha (=murthi) or a representation of God is used in the worship. Such a ritualistic worship is highly symbolical with deep philosophical, esoteric and spiritual import.

Some Hindu pundits have said “vighraha” (a Sanskrit word) etymologically can be divided into “vi” (=removes) and “graham(m)” (planets): that which removes the ill effects of the “grahas” or planets.

Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji explains further the reason for the use of vighraha (pg. 109, All About Hinduism): “Saligrama stone induces easily concentration of mind. Everybody has got predilection for a symbol, emblem or image. Idol or Murti (Vighraha), sun, fire, water, Ganga, Saligrama and Linga are all symbols or Pratikas of God which help the aspirants to attain one-pointedness of mind and purity of heart.

“These are all personal inclinations in the worshipper due to his belief in their special efficacy for him. Psychologically, all this means that a particular mind finds that it works best in the direction desired by means of particular instruments or emblems or images. The vast bulk of humanity are either of impure or of weak mind. Therefore, the object of worship must be pure for these people. The objects that are capable of exciting lust and dislike must be avoided. But, a higher, advanced Sadhaka who has a pure mind and who sees the divine presence everywhere and in everything, can worship any kind of object.”

Home Puja

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

“Puja” can be done in the home, temple, during ceremonies and at festivals. Every Hindu home must have a personal shrine at an appropriate place in the house. It is imperative that every Hindu should do daily puja at home. A daily puja usually consists of a simple worship of offerings, such as an offering of light, water and incense, and/or fruit, followed by an aarti.

Home puja includes several agamic upacaras (observances). The following is an example of what constitutes a Home puja done by aspirants in the Smartha or perhaps even in Saivite tradition:

- 1.Dyana/ Avahana (“invocation”): The deity is invited to the ceremony.
- 2.Asana: The deity is offered a seat.
- 3.Paathyam: The deity’s feet are washed.
- 4.Arghya: Water is offered so the deity may wash His face and hands.
- 5.Acamaniya: Water is offered to Him.
- 6.Madhuparka: The deity is offered water, honey, milk, etc.
- 7.Snana or abhisekha: Water is offered for bathing.
- 8.Acamaniya.
- 9.Vastra: Offering clothes to the Deity
- 10.Upaneeyam: Adorning the deity with turmeric, etc.
- 11.Aaparanam: Adorning Him with jewels.

- 12.Kantham: Adorning Him with perfumes.
- 13.Atchathai: Offering Tumeric-flavoured rice.
- 14.Puspa: Flowers are offered to the Lord.
- 15.Archana: Recitation of Mantras
- 16.Dhupa: Incense is burned for the Deity.
- 17.Dipa: A burning lamp is waved in front of the image.
- 18.Naivedya or prasada: Foods for the deity.
- 19.Paaneeyam: Oblation.
- 20.Acamaniya.
- 21.Thampulam: Offering Vettrilai to the Deity.
- 22.Aarati
- 23.Mantra Pushpam: Offering flowers to the Deity.
- 24.Thothiram.
- 25.Paarayana
- 26.Japa
- 27.Dyana
- 28.Namaskara: The worshiper and family prostrate to the Deity.
- 29.Prarthana
- 30.Shanthi mantra
- 31.Aarathi
- 32.Mangalam
- 33.Prayachittam: Mitigatory prayers
- 34.Samarpanam
- 35.Yathasth-thaanam: conclusion
- 36.Acamaniya

Divine Worship Or Upasana

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Worship is the expression of devotion, reverence and love to the Lord, of keen yearning to be united with Him and of spiritual thirsting to hold conscious communion with Him. The devotee prays to the Lord for granting him intense devotion and removing the veil of ignorance. He pines for His benign grace. He constantly remembers His Name. He repeats His Mantra. He sings His praise. He does Kirtana. He hears and recites His Lilas. He lives in His Dhama in the company of His devotees. He meditates on His form, His nature, His attributes and His Lilas. He visualises the form of the Lord with closed eyes and enjoys supreme peace and bliss.

Worship is the effort on the part of the Upasaka, i.e., he who does Upasana or worship, to reach the proximity or presence of God or the Supreme Self. Upasana literally means sitting near God. Upasana is approaching the chosen ideal or object of worship by meditating on it in accordance with the teachings of the Sastras and the Guru and dwelling steadily in the current of that one thought, like a thread of oil poured from one vessel to another (Tailadharavat). It consists of all those observances and practices, physical and mental, by which the aspirant or Jijnasu makes a steady progress in the realm of spirituality and eventually realises in himself—in his own heart—the presence of Godhead.

Benefits Of Worship

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Worship of the Lord purifies the heart, generates harmonious vibrations, steadies the mind, purifies and ennobles the emotions, harmonises the five sheaths, and eventually leads to communion, fellowship or God-realisation.

Upasana helps the devotee to sit near the Lord or to commune with Him. It fills the mind with Suddha Bhava and Prema or pure love for the Lord. It gradually transmutes man into a divine being.

Upasana changes the mental substance, destroys Rajas and Tamas and fills the mind with Sattva or purity. Upasana destroys Vasanas, Trishnas, egoism, lust, hatred, anger, etc. Upasana turns the mind inward and induces Antarmukha Vritti. It eventually brings the devotee face to face with the Lord, frees the devotee from the wheel of births and deaths, and confers on him immortality and freedom.

The mind becomes that on which it meditates in accordance with the analogy of the wasp and the caterpillar (Bhramara-Kitaka Nyaya). Just as you think, so you become. This is the immutable psychological law. There is a mysterious or inscrutable power (Achintya Sakti) in Upasana which makes the meditator and the meditated identical.

You will find in the Bhagavad-Gita: "But by devotion to Me alone, I may thus be perceived, O Arjuna; and known and seen in essence and entered, O Parantapa" (Ch. XI, 54).

Patanjali Maharshi emphasises in various places in his Raja Yoga Sutras, on the importance of Upasana. For even a Raja Yogi, Upasana is necessary. He has his own Ishta Devata or guiding Deity—Yogesvara Krishna or Lord Siva. Self-surrender to God is an Anga (limb) of Raja Yoga and Kriya Yoga. Patanjali says: "One can enter into Samadhi through Upasana."

Of all those things which are conducive to spiritual advancement, Adhyatmic uplift and the acquisition of Dharma, Upasana is one which is not only indispensably requisite, but eminently beneficial to all classes and grades of people. It is easy too.

Eating, drinking, sleeping, fear, copulation, etc., are common in brutes and human beings, but that which makes one a real man or a God-man is the religious consciousness. He who leads a mere outward sensual life without doing any Upasana is an animal only, though he wears outwardly the form of a human being.

Saguna-Upasana And Nirguna-Upasana

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Upasana is of two kinds, viz., Pratika-Upasana and Ahamgraha-Upasana. Pratika means a symbol. Pratika-Upasana is Saguna-Upasana. Ahamgraha-Upasana is Nirguna-Upasana or meditation on the

formless and attributeless Akshara or transcendental Brahman. Meditation on idols, Saligrama, pictures of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Gayatri Devi, etc., is Pratika-Upasana. The blue expansive sky, all-pervading ether, all-pervading light of the sun, etc., are also Pratikas for abstract meditation. Saguna-Upasana is concrete meditation. Nirguna-Upasana is abstract meditation.

Hearing of the Lilas of the Lord, Kirtana or singing His Names, constant remembrance of the Lord (Smarana), service of His feet, offering flowers, prostration, prayer, chanting of Mantra, self-surrender, service of Bhagavatas, service of humanity and country with Narayana-Bhava, etc., constitute Saguna-Upasana.

Chanting of Om with Atma-Bhava, service of humanity and country with Atma-Bhava, mental Japa of Om with Atma or Brahma Bhava, meditation on Soham or Sivoham or on the Mahavakyas such as Aham Brahma Asmi or Tat Tvam Asi after sublating the illusory vehicles through 'Neti, Neti' doctrine, constitute Ahamgraha-Upasana or Nirguna-Upasana.

Saguna-Upasana is Bhakti Yoga or the Yoga of Devotion. Nirguna-Upasana is Jnana Yoga or the Yoga of Knowledge. Worshippers of Saguna (the qualified) Brahman and of Nirguna (the unqualified) Brahman reach the same goal. But, the latter path is very hard, because the aspirant has to give up attachment to the body (Dehabhimana) from the very beginning of his spiritual practice. The Akshara or the Imperishable is very hard to reach for those who are attached to their bodies. Further, it is extremely difficult to fix the mind on the formless and attributeless Brahman. Contemplation on the Akshara or Nirguna Brahman demands a very sharp, one-pointed and subtle intellect.

The Bhavas In Bhakti Yoga

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

The Yoga of Bhakti or Devotion is much easier than Jnana Yoga or philosophical meditations. In Bhakti Yoga, the devotee establishes a near and dear relationship with the Lord. He cultivates slowly any one of the six Bhavas according to his temperament, taste and capacity.

Santa Bhava, Dasya Bhava, Sakhya Bhava, Vatsalya Bhava, Kanta Bhava and Madhurya Bhava are the six kinds of attributes of devotees or Bhavas towards God. The Bhavas differ in type and intensity of feeling. The different Bhavas are arranged in order of their intensity. Dhruva and Prahlada had the feeling of a

child to its parents. This is Santa Bhava. In Dasya Bhava, the devotee behaves like a servant. His Lord is his master. Hanuman is an ideal servant of God. In Sakhya Bhava, there is a sense of equality. Arjuna and Kuchela had this Bhava. In Vatsalya Bhava, the devotee looks upon the Lord as his own child. Yasoda had this Bhava for Sri Krishna. Kausalya had this Bhava for Sri Rama. Kanta Bhava is the love of the wife towards the husband. Sita and Rukmini had this Bhava. The culmination is reached in Madhurya Bhava. The lover and the Beloved become one through the intensity of love. Radha and Mira had this type of love.

The last Bhava is the highest culmination of Bhakti. It is merging or absorption in the Lord. The devotee adores the Lord. He constantly remembers Him. He sings His Name (Kirtana). He speaks of His glories. He repeats His Name. He chants His Mantra. He prays and prostrates. He hears His Lilas. He does total, ungrudging, unconditional surrender, obtains His grace, holds communion with Him and gets absorbed in Him eventually.

In Madhurya Bhava, there is the closest relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There is no sensuality in Kanta and Madhurya Bhavas. There is no tinge of carnality in them. Passionate people cannot understand these two Bhavas as their minds are saturated with passion and lower sexual appetite. Sufistic saints also have the Bhava of lover and the Beloved, Madhurya Bhava. The Gita Govinda written by Jaya Deva is full of Madhurya Rasa. The language of love which the mystic uses cannot be comprehended by worldly persons. Only Gopis, Radha, Mira, Tukaram, Narada, Hafiz and similar other great devotees of the Lord can understand this language.

Puja And Ishta-Devata

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Puja is the common term for ritual worship, of which there are numerous synonyms such as Archana, Vandana, Bhajana, etc., though some of these stress certain aspects of it. The object of worship is the Ishta Devata or guiding Deity or the particular form of the Deity whom the devotee worships—Narayana or Vishnu as such, or His forms as Rama and Krishna in the case of Vaishnavas, Siva in His eight forms in the case of Saivas and Devi in the case of Saktas.

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The vast bulk of humanity are either of impure or of weak mind. Therefore, the object of worship must be pure for these people. The objects that are capable of exciting lust and dislike must be avoided. But, a higher, advanced Sadhaka who has a pure mind and who sees the divine presence everywhere and in everything, can worship any kind of object.

In Puja, an image or picture representing some divine form is used as the object of worship. The image is adored. All image, a Sila or Vigraha or Murti, represents the particular Lord who is invoked in it. A Linga represents Siva. It represents the secondless, formless Brahman. The Sruti says: "Ekamevadviyam Brahma—The Brahman is one alone, without a second." There is no duality here. A Linga is shining and attractive to the eyes. It helps concentration. Ravana propitiated Siva and obtained boons by worshipping the Linga.

A Saligrama is an idol of Vishnu. Saligrama is the symbol of Vishnu. There are images of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Karttikeya, Ganesa, Hanuman, Dattatreya, Sita, Lakshmi, Parvati, Durga, Kali, Sarasvati, etc., according to the taste of the particular devotee.

The images of Vishnu and of His Avatars, and the images of Sakti and Siva, are the popular idols that are worshipped both in temples and in the houses. The idols in the temples of Tirupati, Pandarpur, Palani, Katirgama, etc., are powerful Deities. They are Pratyaksha Devatas. They grant boons to the

devotees, cure their ailments and give Darsana. Wonderful Lilas are associated with these Deities. There is no polytheism in Hinduism. Siva, Vishnu, Brahma and Sakti are different aspects of one Lord.

God reveals Himself to His devotees in a variety of ways. He assumes the very form which the devotee has chosen for his worship. If you worship Him as Lord Hari with four hands, He will come to you as Hari. If you adore Him as Siva, He will give you Darsana as Siva. If you worship Him as Mother Durga or Kali, He will come to you as Durga or Kali. If you worship Him as Lord Rama, Lord Krishna or Lord Dattatreya, He will come to you as Rama, Krishna or Dattatreya. If you worship Him as Christ or Allah, He will come to you as Christ or Allah.

You may worship Lord Siva or Lord Hari, Lord Ganesa or Lord Subrahmanya or Lord Dattatreya, or anyone of the Avatars, Lord Rama or Lord Krishna, Sarasvati or Lakshmi, Gayatri or Kali, Durga or Chandi. All are aspects of one Isvara or Lord. Under whatever name and form, it is Isvara who is adored. Worship goes to the Indweller, the Lord in the form. It is ignorance to think that one form is superior to another. All forms are one and the same. Siva, Vishnu, Gayatri, Rama, Krishna, Devi and Brahman are one. All are adoring the same Isvara. The differences are only differences of names due to differences in the worshippers, but not in the object of adoration. It is only out of ignorance that different religionists and different sects fight and quarrel amongst themselves.

"Don't bother about why creation came into being, but try to know the Creator!"

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Question: The Gita touches on many subjects which are useful to an aspirant after God-Knowledge, but strangely enough, omits to mention anything about the purpose behind creation. Why did God embark on creation at all?

Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji : "The Lord's silence, in the Gita, about the purpose of creation, is truly a demonstration of His divine wisdom. This very same problem arises in various minds in various forms. How did Avidya arise in Brahman? When did Karma begin? Why did the Formless assume forms? How could darkness or Maya exist in the Supreme Absolute Light? And so on. There can be no answer to these questions. It involves the understanding of the Ultimate Principle, the Intelligence that is behind and beyond these questions, the Cause of all causes, the Subject of all objects. It cannot be known as an object. And, when the subject (Self or Atman) knows Itself, speech and thought cease. The questioner and question vanish in the quest. The doubt disappears in the doubter. In that Supreme Silence, the

problem is inexpressibly solved! The riddle is solved; but speech is baffled and the question remains unanswerable.

“Therefore, the Lord is silent about the transcendental question in the Gita; but, such is the divine wisdom of the Almighty that He gives ways and means of solving the problem.

“Don’t bother about why creation came into being, but try to know the Creator! Take creation for what it is and try to transcend it. This is wisdom. Trying to probe intellectually into the mystery is only buying psychological distress.

“There is no ‘Why?’ in respect of transcendental matters. ‘Why?’ is only for worldly things. Reason is finite and frail. God only knows the ‘Why?’. Realize the Self. Then you will get the answer. Then you will know the origin and nature of Maya and everything.”

“...Unless we learn the manner of living in this world upon the Gita-spirit, Gita-ideal, we will lose our way. We will get caught and entangled. Always assert: “Nothing can entangle me. Never can I become entangled in anything, because I am the immortal, ever-free Soul, always one, secondless.” It is this interior awareness that makes one go through life amidst the many and yet rooted in the One.

“This Gita-awareness within and the Gita-vision of this changing world, the need to be in the midst of the field of action but yet maintain and retain one’s awareness of being a serene witness, is absolutely essential to all sadhakas who, being in the world and of the world, have to move towards the great Goal. It is all the more essential in these changing times when human society has changed so vastly.

“Conditions are not always conducive, helpful and favourable to this interior journey of the soul towards its eternal Source. There is a lot of distraction and a lot of disturbance. In the midst of all that, serenity is to be maintained.

“It is only the vision and the spirit of the Gita upadesa of the second and third chapters that will enable us to be in the midst of activity and yet be serenely poised in the Self that is actionless and changeless. That alone abides; all else passes on.

"I shall be rooted in the Eternal and function in the non-eternal. I shall abide in the Divine-God in me and I in God." Thus may you reflect and contemplate upon the Gita ideal of life in this world and the Gita ideal of action in the midst of this ever-changing phenomenal situation. May you reflect deeply upon this and create an awakened interior within, so that the world is not able to affect your sadhana, so that your sadhana goes on unhampered in spite of the distractions outside, because you ever abide in the Self.

"May the Lord, Jagad-Guru, Gita-Acharya, Bhagavan Lord Krishna, the World Teacher, shower His divine grace upon you and may His grace manifest within you as this awakened spiritual awareness and as the ability to act with expertise, so that in the midst of action you still maintain an abidance in the ever-actionless Reality within, so that you are able to be actionless in the midst of action.

"May God's grace manifest within you as the heightened awareness and elevated, uplifted consciousness of the Reality. May you abide in that, and may you move through this journey of life as an anasakta karmi, a detached actor. Always think: "Action is going on. I am not attached to it. I am aware that I am not the actor." May His grace manifest within you as this inner perception and the inner awareness, the inner consciousness, which is the key to successful karma yoga together with your bhakti, jnana and dhyana."

One of the favourite sayings of Gurudev Paramahansa Dr. Rupnathji, which he both wrote in his writings as well as quoted in his divine talks was, "Never despair. Never despair. Nil desperandum." And a poet once said, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Another poet said, "Tell me not in mournful numbers life is but an empty dream." You have come here to strive and attain. Strive on. Do purushartha. "Heart within, God overhead." Be strong. Be determined and plod on. If thus you do, you will get help from God. That is the meaning of "Heart within and God overhead." In your heart have the right attitude and plod on. Do exertion and then from God help will come.

There are two ways of approaching life. One is diffidence, lack of confidence, negativity: "I don't think I can. It's too difficult. I can't." Another way is: "I can. Whether I can or can't, how can I say unless I first of all try? Then only I can know whether I can or can't." So to come to a foregone conclusion that I can't is not rational. It is irrational. "Let me give it a fair trial. I will try my best." And if after trying your very best, you do not succeed in attaining the objective, I can assure you, you have not failed. Success may not be yours, but you have succeeded. You have fulfilled a human being's duty.

Because you are made in the image of God, you are not a bundle of negativity. God is all that is positive, all that is auspicious, good and beautiful. There is no negativity in God, and you are made in His image. You have potential for all that is positive and positive only. You should not belie your divine nature. At every step, in all things, your life should prove your divine nature.

Therefore it behooves you to always take a positive attitude towards life. Always have a positive view of things, not a negative one. Have a positive attitude towards life, and in your daily life always move forward by taking a positive approach to life, never a negative approach. Then your heart is in the state that the poet implied when he said, "Heart within and God overhead."

And it is for such a heart that we should pray to Lord Karthikeyan or Skanda Bhagavan: "I have full trust that You will be my leader, that Your grace will be my guiding force and a leading light in my life day by day. So, with Your help there is nothing that I cannot do. With Your help, O Lord, all things are possible for me. And I will take Your help for granted because You are grace. You are love and compassion. You are ever ready to bestow Your grace upon all sincere seeking sadhakas. Being certain of this, I shall strive, having full trust that You will help where help is needed."

Therefore, of the two attitudes, a positive and negative attitude towards life, of the two approaches, a positive and negative approach to life, and of the two ways of viewing things, a positive and negative view towards all things, the wise sadhaka always takes the positive approach—which is the right approach—and never takes the negative approach which is the wrong approach.

Hope is a divine quality. Determination is a divine quality. It is a manifestation of sakti. Therefore, it is our duty to ourselves and to God to always keep our interior in a positive state. It is our duty to always take a positive view of things. It is our duty to always take a positive approach towards life, and it is our duty to always move forward keeping in our heart a positive attitude towards life and actions. This is the right attitude, and this you must adopt. And this will help you to succeed in your life!

Since the goal of life is a Supreme Aloneness known as kaivalya, and God Himself is alone to Himself, spiritual practice or sadhana in the direction of the attainment of this supreme Aloneness also consists of a development of a kind of aloneness in our own selves.

Are we alone in this world, or are we not alone in this world? There are two types of aloneness. One is a desolate, depressing feeling of being discarded by human society, and having been subjected to an

unfortunate psychological aloneness, as if in a prison. This is one kind of aloneness, where an external force is exercised upon us to be alone to ourselves. It is a punishment of a legal nature, and not a happy, welcome condition.

There is another kind of aloneness which we impose upon our own selves, due to being disgusted with certain things, being unhappy with conditions prevailing in society and circumstances around. One would like to be away from these circumstances, and be alone to oneself somewhere else.

When people are angry, they wish not to speak to any person. "Do not talk to me!" is a retort of an angry person. They do not want to eat. They want to sit alone somewhere, because of the intensity of anger. That is also a kind of aloneness imposed by oneself, upon oneself, for totally negative reasons.

There are various other types of aloneness, which one feels within oneself when one has lost everything that one had: all the property has gone; relatives have deserted the person; the business has failed; the stock market has gone down; millions have been lost; the very earth is shaking under the feet, and one feels at that time an aloneness of a wretched type.

I have heard of a person who was always busy in stock market dealings, and in one particular instance, that person lost everything in one second. That very day he died of a heart attack because of the wretchedness that he felt within himself, an aloneness which entered into his vitals and took away his energy.

But kaivalya, which is aloneness, is not a psychological aloneness. It is not a loneliness that is felt by the mind attached to this body. It is the loneliness of the spirit that is within us. Our soul is alone by itself.

That we are, truly speaking, alone in this world is something very easy to understand. All the associations that we are speaking of – money, power, and social relations – are conditions artificially created by the coming together of a certain favourable atmosphere, because when a person is born as a little child, that child is totally alone to itself. It has no property; it has no consciousness of relations. It cannot know that it belongs to anybody, or anyone belongs to it.

There is a gap of some years which we call life in this world. When that span of life is over, another aloneness creeps into oneself, which is the time of departure from this world. A sense of agonising

aloneness is felt at that time. In something like a second childhood, the aged person starts behaving as if he is a crawling baby; the mind blabbers and chatters and starts saying anything and everything, as an illiterate, untutored child would speak. Erratic desires arise in the mind at that time. While really in childhood the consciousness of external relations is not there, in old age, at the time of passing, there is the other side of the feeling of aloneness, that everyone has left them.

When a person is passing, relations come near. "Do you know who I am?" they ask. "Do you recognise me?" Sometimes the consciousness of recognition fails. Even if the eyes see, and through the eyes one can recognise who the person is, one cannot fully express that relation. Hearing also fails, afterwards, and eyes fail. The mind alone starts thinking, but the mind also fails. Only the prana remains, afterwards. When the prana fails, there is exit from this body. This exit is, to a person who has been accustomed to social living and a grandiose public existence, the worst thing that can be imagined.

It is necessary to have that amount of wisdom in everyone, especially as spiritual seekers, that when aloneness was the condition of our coming into this world, and aloneness is the condition into which we shall enter when we are departing, how is it that we do not feel alone in the middle, and we have a totally different feeling of having so many things, which we never brought when we came, nor shall we take when we go?

So, all relationship of every kind is a total illusion that is foisted upon the socially conditioned mind of an individual, because if that sense of aloneness, which was at the time of birth, and which shall be at the time of passing, continues for some fifty or sixty years in the middle also, the person may perish due to the grief of it.

But nature's cleverness sees to it that the individual does not perish before due time, so an illusory satisfaction is created that one has everything: "So much land I have got." The land was existing there even before the birth of this person, and it shall be there, unaffected, even after the person leaves this world, but yet he thinks, "It is my land. Hundreds and hundreds of acres of land are mine. I have got so many friends, so many relations."

Like flies leaving one place and going to another place, all things shall leave a person at any moment. Bereavement is the law of nature, because of the fact that association is an artificial, contrived situation that cannot stand for all time.

When discretion takes the upper hand in our life, we shall realise that we are always alone to ourselves. There are no friends in this world, because the association of people in the form of friendship is conditioned by certain arrangements of agreement: "If you do this, I am your friend. If you do not do this, I am not your friend." So, we have put an 'if', even in the friendship. And if that 'if' is lifted, no person can be a friend of any other person. It is a kind of contract, as it were, that one enters into when there is an organisation and an association. There cannot be an organisation or an association of people, unless there is an agreement to behave in a particular manner, and conduct themselves in a requisite manner, for a purpose which is in agreement among themselves. So goes society; so the community goes; so states go; so nations go. If the agreement is broken for any reason whatsoever, the person stands alone to himself.

A spiritual seeker has to know this aloneness in oneself. It is not good to feel aloneness only at the time of departure from this body, because surely it will come as a shock at that time. That we are going to lose everything is something that need not be thrust upon us at a time when we are not expecting it; we must be prepared for it, even now.

When the worst happens we will know how to face it, because there cannot be anything worse than death, where we are dispossessed of everything that we thought is ours. Considering that associations of wealth and relations are intensely conditional and cannot be relied upon – anyone can turn one's back against us for some reason or other – it is necessary to find peace in one's own self. If peace is borrowed from associations and connections with external things like wealth and relations of people, that borrowed happiness and peace will go like the money of a creditor, which will not stand with us for a long time. We cannot live by borrowed peace.

An intrinsic strength should be developed within our own selves. It is not a strength extrinsically foisted upon us by authority, power, election and position. Intrinsic strength is that which one feels within oneself, even if everything goes. But what kind of strength can there be when everything goes? You will be wondering how one can feel intrinsically strong and satisfied if everything departs, and everything collapses. What kind of intrinsic strength can be there? That intrinsic strength comes by our friendship, not with human beings and monetary existence, but by our friendship with nature as a whole.

We are not friends of nature. We are opposed to nature, oftentimes, because we feel that we are totally independently constituted, though the fact is that our personality is a borrowed existence made up by the substances borrowed from nature outside. We do not exist independent of earth, water, fire, air and ether, which constitute our body. But we are not grateful to nature. We do not recognise that our existence is nothing but a borrowed existence and that we live because of nature's cooperation with us.

When nature protects us, our aloneness expands itself into the largeness of nature itself. The whole universe is nature, in one way. Whatever is the environment around us, about which I spoke on the first day itself, is the thing and the substance out of which we are made. Cosmic operations come together in a pinpointed, pressure point-like manner, and form our individuality. Cosmic substances, which are spread out in all directions, for some reason concentrate themselves at a point and create a situation which is called 'my individuality'.

If this is known by us, and if we think in terms of those forces which have contributed to the formation of our personality, we shall not depend for our existence on frail relationships with untrustworthy human beings and unreliable wealth of the world, but will rely upon what is our trustworthy friend. That which is a reliable associate of our own selves is that which will not desert us at any moment. The very wind that blows, the very sun that shines, and the air that we breathe, which are cosmically operating, are the fingers of God working everywhere.

Philosophers and mystics say that spiritual life is a process of the movement of the alone to the Alone; it is the small 'a' ris-ing gradually to the highest capital 'A'. Everything is alone in this world. The connection of one thing with another thing is arti-ficial. Two things cannot be joined together, under any circum-stance. Nature's law is aloneness, finally. Nature is indivisible oneness, and aloneness, by itself.

All things stand by themselves in their cooperative makeup, which arises on account of the functioning of the total nature in everyone. Though we look like many people sitting here, we are all little chips of the old block of Universal Substance, which makes us look similar to one another, as statues made of marble have a similarity of the substance out of which they are made, because all are marble in spite of the shape and the contour of the carved figure.

The collecting of oneself into an aloneness by oneself, at least during meditation, is an utter necessity. There should be some time in your life when you feel that you are alone to yourself. People mostly are miserably when they are totally alone. When we have no work to do, when we have finished the day's duty and had our lunch and dinner, if nobody comes to talk, we just walk out to the marketplace or the club so that we may see people and have a chat with them, because to be alone to oneself, unbefriended, unseen and unsung, is misery.

Does anyone feel miserable when one is alone to oneself? "Where is my husband? Where is my wife? Where are my children? Where are my relations? I was expecting these guests; where are they?" If they do not come, we are not happy.

Their coming, their cooperation, their feeling of at-one-ment with us makes us feel happy – my child, my daughter, my son, my this, my that. If these are dissociated for any reason, a predicament that can come upon us at any time, we shall be lost souls in one instant. It is necessary for a spiritual seeker to feel that he or she is never a lost soul. The soul is ever complete in itself. It only requires recognition of the aloneness.

So, when we sit for meditation, or even without being in a state of meditation, when we are without any kind of outer association, we can gather ourselves into this conviction of our being always guarded by the powers of the quarters in heaven. "This person who is satisfied in one's own self is guarded by the quarters," say the scriptures. "All the eight quarters of heaven will bend before you and offer obeisance to you," says the Upanishad. "Be confident that you are in perpetual friendly association with the permanent forces of nature; they can never desert you."

For this purpose, to get accommodated to a satisfaction of being alone to oneself, intense practice of inner enquiry about one's own self is necessary. Big man or small man, with authority or without authority, whatever it is, let each one put a question to one's own self: "What is my value? What is my worth? Is there any worth in me, independent of any kind of external association?" When you are alone in your bedroom, when nobody sees you, when you are isolated in a little corner of your own house, divest yourself of the importance that is foisted on you by external conditions. Put a question to yourself: "What is my importance in this world?"

Sincerely if you put a question to yourself, you will find that there is no great importance associated with oneself. But, is it necessary to feel always that one is an unimportant person? There is an importance attached to us intrinsically, which we have forgotten, and we feel miserable, unimportant, finite, limited, localised, and wretched, because of our association of importance with conditions of the outside world which are artificially made to be connected with ourselves. A deliberate dissociation of psychological connection with things, not necessarily forced upon us by conditions of life, should land us in the ascertainment of our true nature of substantiality, or unsubstantiality.

If we have a strength of our own inside, born of a conviction of inclusiveness and perfect adjustment of thought, coextensive with nature as a whole, there should be no difficulty in being alone to oneself. It is

actually a large aloneness, an expanded form of aloneness – not socially expanded, but metaphysically expanded, spiritually expanded. Your soul has touched the souls of things outside, and so that aloneness that you feel at that time is a spiritual aloneness, a reflection of God’s aloneness, as it were.

I am reminded of a line from Milton’s Paradise Lost where Adam, having being created, sees around him large nature, one thing having connection with another thing. There are trees and animals; they live in a brood, but he has nothing with him. He complains to God Almighty: “My Lord, I am alone. You have not given me any friends.”

The Lord Almighty God answers him: “My dear child, do you know that I am alone? I have no friends. I have no associations. I am alone to myself. Do you know that? Can you say that I am an unhappy person because I have nobody around me, and I am alone? Learn this from me.” This is an answer that the Lord is supposed to be speaking to Adam when he complains of the lack of facilities of social association. This is not in the Bible; it is only Milton’s idea.

In the beginning, the aloneness that we feel in ourselves is most unhappy, most unwanted, and grief is the nature of that aloneness that we feel. “Oh, nobody wants me.” Everybody wants us, if we only want everything. The world reacts upon us in the manner we react towards itself. But, we have no feeling for things of this nature, and our feeling is in respect of social associations only.

Our intrinsic strength does not depend upon any kind of social contact, because that is brittle and it can break at any moment. It may be there; it does not matter. Let it be there, but we cannot depend on it always. There is no one in this world who finally wants us, and really wants us. Any condition which is unfavourable will reveal this fact. Do you believe that always there will be favourable conditions prevailing everywhere?

The so-called favourable circumstances, in the midst of which we are living, are supposed to be the product of some of the karmas that we performed in our previous lives. We must have done some charity, some good deeds, some service to people. That potency of good action that we performed, in respect of the society around us, brings to us now, in this world of human relations, a satisfaction of being in the midst of friends, relations, and cooperations. But as karmas perish, together with their fruit, their results also perish; that which has come will also depart.

The Mahabharata gives a concluding message: “Any kind of accumulation, whatever be its nature, will end in the dissolution of that accumulation. The collecting of things will end in the dismemberment of the parts of that collection. All who rise in authority and power in society will end in fall unto the lowest level. All relations end with bereavement.”

Samyogaha viprayoantah: “As logs of wood incidentally meet each other on the surface of the ocean due to the wind blowing in one particular direction,” says Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa in the Mahabharata conclusion, “they become friends, not knowing that their friendship and coming together on the surface of the ocean is due to the wind that blows in a particular direction.”

We meet each other; we are friendly with people; we have got relations. We come together in a fraternity of relationship in the same way as logs of wood meet each other on the surface of the ocean. But the logs have no independent thinking process in their minds. The logs cannot control this connection. The wind must be blowing from somewhere. Some super-operation is active in bringing us in contact with certain things in the world, but it can operate in the other direction, also, because nature has no friends and no enemies.

When the biting winter is making us feel very uncomfortable and a little sunbath in the winter is very pleasant, we cannot say that the sun is our great friend, because he is giving the warmth when we are shivering with cold in winter. And in the hot summer, if a person has sunstroke and is about to collapse, we cannot say that the sun is an unkind person. The sun was neither favourable to us, nor unfavourable to us. Some operation is there, superintending beyond human control, which makes it appear that things are of a particular nature.

No one can escape death. It is not necessarily after twenty-five, thirty, forty, or fifty years; it is at any moment. The length of life of a person, the duration for which we will be alive in this world, the experiences that we will pass through during this duration of our life, and all the experiences of pleasure and pain connected with that, are already inscribed on a plate even when we are inside the womb of the mother. Our future, how tall and how wide we will be, how wealthy and how poor, and how long the life will be, with what kind of health and what kind of illness, with what relations or with no relations – everything is decided.

Inside the womb itself all things are written, and we cannot change it afterwards, because that which is written inside the womb is actually a result of what we have brought with us from previous births. We will not get anything which we have not actually deserved. Undeserved facility is impossible.

All the facilities that we enjoy in this world, and all the suffering also to which we are subjected, are what we have brought with us. We have sown the seeds of joy and sorrow both in one life, and those seeds will crop up into the joys and the sorrows of our daily experience. There is no use complaining, "So and so is giving me great joy; so and so is causing me great unhappiness." We have ourselves created the joy by some good actions that we have performed in the previous birth. We have miserably failed, and done something which is most untoward; that has reacted upon us. Everybody deserves, and then receives.

We are not given a grace or a gift by anybody. No charity is given by nature to us. There is no such thing as charity, gifts, and just giving for nothing. No; that cannot take place. There is no charity in nature; it will give us what we deserve.

Our cooperation with nature, with God Himself, and our inward communication of our own being with the being of that which is supposed to be blessing us will decide the extent of the blessing that we will receive from nature and God Himself.

e yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajan yaham, says the Bhagavadgita: "As you think of me, so I will think of you. As you describe me, so I shall describe you. Whatever you have given me, I shall give you back. The only thing is, if you give a small quantum of goodness to nature or God, it will come back to you in large measure, because of the pervasiveness of nature and of God. We may give a little thing, but a large thing comes."

Sudama brought one handful of chura and was hiding it under his armpit in a niggardly fashion, tied in a ragged cloth, which he wanted to offer to Sri Krishna in Dwaraka. He did not want to open it because of the glory around – the large golden plate that was placed before him. Sri Krishna asked him, "My dear friend, what have you brought?" He could not say that he had brought a wretched thing. He was hiding it in his armpit and never wanted Him to know. But Sri Krishna said, "No, you have brought something." He pulled it out. He pulled one handful. When it fell on that large golden plate, it started mountain-like overflowing.

We may give one grain, but we will be given back a mountain of grains in return by God. Give, and it shall be given unto you – pressed, shaken, overflowing, not in the niggardly way you gave.

This is the inner secret of spiritual performance, by which we must recognise our true friend, and our true source of succour, who will protect us when we are in danger. Can you think of any person in the world who will be ready to protect you when you are suffering? You have seen, before your eyes, that people who held high power in society and administration are cudgeled and thrown into the streets, as it were. They are unwanted elements, like animals. Can you trust human beings?

Today he is Caesar in Rome; tomorrow, he is a target of attack from the very friends that he had around him. Remember the words of Shakespeare: "But yesterday, only yesterday, the word of Caesar might have stood against the world. One word from Caesar would face the whole world. But today, no one is so poor as to do him reverence." The king has become a beggar in one minute. And if we think we are also kings, then we should be prepared for that beggarly life one day or the other. We deny a little particle of goodness to God, and we become poor.

I will tell you a humorous story of why Sudama became so poor. He was a comrade and a schoolmate of Sri Krishna. They were studying under the Guru Sandipani as students. Among many other students, Sri Krishna, the little boy, and Sudama, another boy, and many others went to the forest for cutting wood. That was the system of ancient Guru seva. Wherever there is a gurukula, the students are supposed to bring holy firewood from the forest for the performance of yajna or havana by the Guru. The wife of Sandipani Guru gave some fried channa to Sudama. She tied it in a bundle and gave it to this boy: "It may be raining; you may be cold and hungry. When you return in the evening, you will find it very difficult, so I will give you a bundle of this fried channa. You can eat it on the way."

It appears that, due to fatigue, these boys and Sri Krishna, also little boy, were all lying down. Sudama felt like eating the channa. He took some and was crunching it; Krishna heard and said, "Oh, you are eating something alone to yourself." "No, I am not eating. My teeth are chattering due to cold," he said. This deceptiveness that he showed to a boy like Krishna made him utterly poor, and he became miserable throughout his life. And he had to come for help from the very same person to whom he did not give a little channa. This is a story in the Puranas.

We are mightily guarded; this is something that we have to remember. We are not without friends and relations, but they are in the original heavens and not in the mortal world. Mortal friendship will perish, like anything that is mortal. Mortal association, mortal wealth, and all mortal things go by the very meaning of the word 'mortality'; they cannot stand.

We want immortal satisfaction and unending security – not only for a few minutes. That unending security will be possible only if our real immortal nature associates itself with the immortal source of security. Deathless sources of security alone will give us deathless security. But, if you cling to perishable sources of satisfaction and security, they will go, and whatever they have given will go together with them.

Trust in God is not simply believing in something; it is an inwardness that we are accepting within ourselves that everything is well with us: “If everything goes, still I am perfectly all right, and those things which are invisible to the eyes will come and protect me.”

Spiritual life is painful in the beginning stages, because of the hard psychological discipline required. The discipline is inward, mental, psychological, and organic. It is not external discipline that can take us to God. We may eat only once a day, or we may not eat at all for some days; we may not sleep; we may take a bath a hundred times; we may go on rolling the beads. These are external disciplines that we are imposing upon ourselves, but the internal discipline is that which is known to ourselves only, and not to others.

Socially oriented disciplines are not sufficient. There must be a spiritually oriented discipline, which is the discipline of consciousness itself. Be sure that you are perfectly all right, and under any circumstances you are all right: “Let everything go. I shall be all right. Let nobody talk to me; I shall be all right.” For some reason, you are all right, but you must be really all right. That confidence should arise in you: “Wherever I am, I shall be perfectly all right.” Why should you have any suspicions in this matter? Wherever you are, you are on the surface of the earth only. Wherever you are, you are in the atmosphere of the solar influence and the benefit of the stars. Wherever you are, you are inside the universe; therefore, security and satisfaction should flow to you from all sides.

You are spiritually alone, though socially a unit of human society. The soul has no society. It cannot belong to somebody else. One soul does not belong to another soul. There is no belong-ing, because of their indivisibility of character. Our indivisibility of innermost selfhood will guard us from any kind of miscalculated feeling of there being security from unsoulfilled externalised associations.

To think like this will bring some unhappiness inside, because one may feel that spiritual discipline is an abandoning of the joys of life; it looks like that. That is, you are prepared for the bereavement of all the satisfactions that you may have in this world. One day, they will leave you; this is a fact, and that very

thought is agonising. But that which is really yours will not leave you; that which is going to leave you is not yours.

That which really belongs to you will not leave you, and that which leaves you does not really belong to you. When you leave this world and go to another realm, you will take with you what really belongs to you. What is it that actually belongs to you? It is what you have thought, what you have felt, and what you have actually been contemplating upon in your mind. That will mightily produce an immortal effect, as your true property, finally telling you that you are your only property.

Your property or belonging is yourself only. You have to carry it wherever you go. With that you must be happy. This is the great aloneness that I was trying to explain to you in many ways, so that this mighty inner spiritual aloneness will take refuge in that Absolute Aloneness of God Almighty.

Ever remember God. Feel His presence wherever you go for God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. He is nearer than your breath. See Him in all faces. Cling to His feet. He will protect you and guide you.

Constant remembrance of the Lord will bring you everlasting happiness and Supreme Peace. Let thy every movement be a living prayer to the Lord. Think positively. You grow into a likeness of the thought picture which you hold on to with sincerity and persistence. Contemplate upon your ideal in which you wish to grow. This forms part of daily Spiritual Life.

Have perfect faith in the Lord. His Name is your sole prop, refuge and support. His temple is your pure heart. Be pure in heart and noble in work.

Japa of Lord's Name is your real wealth. Everything else will pass away. The bungalows, the bank balance, the cars and gardens, do not constitute your real wealth. They will not give you peace of mind. You can have peace and bliss only in Him. Yo Vai Bhuma Tat Sukham. Remember this always.

Do Japa, Kirtan, Prayer. Never hurt other's feelings. Thought should be noble and divine. Start the day with God. End the day with God. Fill the day with God. Live the day with God.

Japa of Lord's Name is your real wealth. Japa, Kirtan, Prayer and meditation will surely help you in the purification of the mind and heart.

Please take that Mantra which your heart likes best. That Mantra is the right Mantra which, when taken, brings joy and Peace. You should stick to one Mantra. You should not change from one Mantra to another.

Ever repeat the Name of the Lord. The Lord is everywhere. He is in you and you are in Him. There is no place where He is not. He is closer than your hands and feet. Attain the Lord by regular Japa, Puja and meditation.

Ever repeat the Divine Name of the Lord. The constant chanting of the Divine Name will bring you all joy and happiness.

Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Have separate hours for prayer and meditation. Speak sweetly. Speak little, Help others. Speak the truth at any cost. Be regular in your duties. Remember God at all times. This is Divine Life in essence.

Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Let the sacred Name of the Lord ever be upon thy lips. Feel the presence of God everywhere. God is in you and you are in Him. Do not forget this point. Therefore, hate not any one. Love all.

Practise the presence of the Lord wherever you go. God is everywhere. You are in Him and He is in you. This you will feel as you make progress in prayer and Meditation.

Before you start your Japa in the morning, wash your face and hands thoroughly or take bath if you are used to taking cold bath. Select a particular place to do Japa. Daily practise Japa in the same place where you do Japa regularly. Do not change the place. Lead a simple life. Take Mitahara. Talk little. Speak truth. Be good. Do good. Do not hate anyone. Help others. Pray to God daily. Live righteously. Act truthfully. Meditate regularly. Attain knowledge of the Imperishable. There is no other way to wisdom and peace.

Ceaselessly think of God. Let the sacred Name of the Lord ever be upon thy lips. A regular study of scriptures, enquiry of "Who Am I", and discrimination will undoubtedly lead your goodself to God.

Kindly continue to do your Japa. Wherever your mind moves feel there also, that there is God. Make the mind understand that there is no place left where there is no God. There is God in every speech. Watch the mind steadily. Let it wander for some time. Then try to bring it back upon your chosen ideal. Loud recitation of God's Name helps to develop concentration. If you are not able to read books then request someone in the house to read for you an hour every day some useful spiritual literature.

Live in tune with the Infinite. Rejoice in the Self within. This is a great slogan of life. Ever remember the sacred Name of the Lord.

You can daily sing Lord Siva's Name both morning and evening. Siva is everywhere. He is in you and you are in Him. Feel His presence everywhere.

Feed your mind with thought of God, your heart with purity and your hands with selfless service. Remain soaked in the remembrance of God with a one-pointed mind.

Have some Ideal in your life and work for it. The highest ideal in man's life is the attainment of Perfection. This Perfection is full of peace and happiness. Peace and happiness can be attained by regular prayer and contemplation. Therefore, set apart a few hours of the day for this purpose. Start the day of your activities with prayer and end the day with prayer. Practise the presence of God by remembering Him constantly.

Let the sacred Name of the Lord ever be upon thy lips. See God in every face. Treat all with kindness and compassion. Live a life of simplicity and purity. This is Divine Life.

May His presence ever be felt by you wherever you are, whatever task you are engaged in and at all times. Make His Name thy supreme support. Let remembrance of the Divine be unto you even as breath in the nostrils. Know Him to be the indweller of all things. He is the ever present reality in the midst of changing names and forms.

A harmonious development of the body, mind and soul alone can enable you to fulfil the glorious role for which you have taken birth here. You can attain Self-realisation. Take the sacred Name of the Lord always. Nama Smaran or constant remembrance of the Lord is the only easy Sadhana for God-realisation.

Set apart some fixed hours for Japa and prayer daily. Ever remember God. Let His sacred Name ever be upon thy lips. God is nearer than our hands and feet. He is nearer than your breath. He is everywhere. He is in you and you are in Him. See Him in all places.

Love God fully and intensely with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. You will be wholly absorbed in Him.

Kindly do Ananya Chintana (constant remembrance) of the Lord. None can explain the immense benefits of Japa. Japa is the rod in the hand of the blind aspirant to God on the road to realisation, Japa is the philosopher's stone or divine elixir that makes him God-like. Through Japa alone one can realise God in this life.

Pray to God daily. Let the sacred Name of the Lord ever be upon thy lips. Dedicate all your household duties to the Lord at the end of each day. Feel the presence of the Lord wherever you go.

Life is precious. Therefore, spend your time in useful pursuits. Set apart sometime during the course of the day for prayer and worship. Feel the presence of the Lord wherever you go for He is everywhere. He is closer than our breath and nearer than our hands and feet. He is in you and you are in Him. Always abide in Him.

Start the day with prayer and Japa of the Divine Name. Follow this by little exercises and deep breathing. Remember God at all times, everywhere. You need not be a Yogi but you must be an Aadarsha-Purusha. Your personality must shine with a radiant light of great qualities. Virtue must occupy your heart and mind. Be bold. Be courageous. Be cheerful always. Service, worship and meditation must constitute your inner life. Always do vichar.

Feel the presence of God wherever you go for God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. He is in you and you are in Him. He is nearer than relatives and friends. Live in Him. Love for the Lord brings you all joy, bliss and blessedness in life.

Real happiness lies in a simple and pure life. Love of the Lord will transform you into a Divine Being. Cultivate true love for the Lord by glorifying Him, by chanting His Name and by hearing His glories.

Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Be regular in your prayers, Japa and Svadhyaya. Do not forget the Lord even a single moment of your life. Hold on to God as fast as you can. In Him alone you will find true happiness.

Always remember God. Let His sacred Name ever be upon your lips. Be merged in the thought of God. Give your mind to God and hands to work. Be good. Do good. Hate none. Love all. This is Divine Life.

Live in God. The love of God alone can bring you real happiness in life. God alone is real and all else is unreal. Therefore detach yourself from the worldly objects and attach yourself to God. Ever repeat His sacred Name. Do all your duties as worship of the Lord.

Life is a holy and joyous movement towards God, who is the eternal Source of our being. Life is an expression of our continuous spiritual link with the Divine Essence that pervades and is present everywhere. The practice of the Divine Name and loving remembrance is the secret of regaining this Inner Connection. Offer up all that you do, dedicate your life unto the Divine. This is the golden key to blessedness, fearlessness, freedom and bliss.

Do your duties with full attention. Every act is worship and Yoga if done with the correct spiritual Bhava. The tongue may always go on repeating the Divine OM silently when the body is engaged in work. Morning and evening offer your activities to God by doing Brahma-pan or Krishna-pan.

In prayer, you draw near to the Divine. Devotion develops the spiritual consciousness in the devotees. The practice of the Divine Name grants the priceless treasure of Bhakti or devotion or Divine Love. Loving remembrance of God makes mature this Bhakti and brings you face to face with God. Live for attaining God-vision.

Even though you do not find much time to spend in meditation you may repeat the Lord's Name during the day, whatever the body may be engaged in. This is a very effective Sadhana to win the Lord's Grace. The Divine Name is very potent. Together with the repetition of the Name there should be the attitude of surrender to the will of the Lord, knowing that everything happens by His Will and for our own good. With this inner feeling of absolute surrender to God there arises constant peace and bliss.

Remember to do three things without fail:

One: cultivate the virtues of truth, purity, selflessness, kindness, and simplicity in nature. Control anger, give up hatred or ill-feelings. Treat all as thine own.

Two: remember God at all times and repeat His Name constantly.

Three: dedicate all thy actions to God. Don't think of any activity as worldly. Regard all that you do as sacred and make Arpan to God at every step. Let each day be a day of worshipfulness. Develop your pure emotions but keep them in wise check. Discriminate wisely.

Constantly aspire to feel His presence by calling upon Him. Repeat the Holy Name of the Lord. Constant remembrance of the Lord by the repetition of His Name and thinking of His peace, bliss and light is the surest way to contact Him and live in His immediate and comforting presence. What is wanted is a sustained and constant aspiration with a heart full of love. The Lord is sure to respond to a heart that calls in love, for He is all mercy and all compassion. Be patient and calm and His response will always come.

Side by side with daily and constant meditation you may also read inspiring books written by realised saints and sages. This will keep the aspiration intense and will inspire you. Kindly go through the books of our Divine Master. Every word of his is filled with power and the ability to transform us and lead us Godward. Introspect and remove all defects. At the same time fill the entire being with all Divine qualities.

It is only through selfless service, prayer and worship that one can attain purity of mind. Constantly remember the Lord's Name.

Remain firm in thy adherence to the ideal of Divine Living. Never neglect the study of spiritual books daily even if it be for a short period. Spiritualise thy ordinary professional work by the Bhava of worshipfulness. Be ever cheerful. Practise kindness and charity towards souls that are less favoured by Providence. Let the Divine Name of God be ever upon thy lips. Be a fearless Messenger of Truth and a humble servant of God.

Remembrance of God is Life. Forgetfulness of God is death. The most invaluable and supreme treasure in this world is faith in God and devotion to God. A life without devotion is a dreary waste. Such a life is essenceless and useless. There is no greater treasure than the Divine Name. There is no greater wealth than Dharma or character. Dharma leads to God and in God alone you will find true happiness, peace and bliss. If you want happiness, you must attain God. There is no other way. This is the only way. This is the truth.

He who turns your mind towards God is your greatest well-wisher. He who creates in you devotion for Dharma is your true friend. Spiritual discourses and Satsangas inspire man and turn the mind towards God. A lofty service indeed to mankind.

Set apart sometime both morning and evening for prayer and repetition of God's Name. Start the day with the thought of God. Fill the entire day with the thought of God and retire to bed with the thought of God.

Ever remain immersed in the thought of God for God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. He is in you and you are in Him. Feel this by regular worship and prayer to God.

Your only sole purpose in life is to attain God. All else is useless and worthless. Therefore, strive to attain the Supreme by leading a noble life of simplicity and purity. Take the Name of the Lord always. Let His sacred Name ever be upon your lips. His Name when sincerely taken bestows upon you all joy and blessedness.

Start this New Year feeling the Divine Presence everywhere. Constantly offer prayer to the Lord. Feel He is your very own. Turn your gaze within and enjoy the Eternal Bliss.

Please be regular in your daily meditation. Morning and evening, you should spend at least half an hour in meditation. Constantly live in the remembrance of the Lord. Let His sacred Name ever be on thy lips.

My advice to you is: Lead Divine Life. Practise Japa every day. Sing the Lord's Name every morning and evening. Take regular morning exercises. Speak the truth. Serve the elders. Study Gita and Ramayana. Develop Bhakti. This is Divine Life. Live this noble life. You will attain God-realisation.

Kirtan purifies the mind and heart. All worldly thoughts will disappear during Sankirtan. In this Kaliyuga, the Name of the Lord is the surest remedy for all worldly ills. Please carry on your Sadhana with redoubled vigour and zeal.

You should continue to repeat the sacred Mantra, Om Namah Shivaya. This has my approval. Yes, you can combine Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga. Try to do Japa of the sacred Mantra. Also write the Mantra on a separate notebook. This is called Likhit Japa. Write for half an hour daily. Observe Mouna while writing Japa. Practise Asanas and easy Pranayama to start with. Spend two hours in the early morning in spiritual Sadhana. Chalk out a Sadhana programme for daily practice.

There is infinite Shakti in the Lord's Name. The Lord's Name is the solution for all the troubles that have beset mankind in this modern age.

You are simple and pure. You have to strive hard to cultivate virtues. Be noble. Be simple, and plain like a child. Be honest and truthful. Do not forget to offer daily prayers—morning and evening—unto the Lord. Do Japa and observe silence for half an hour daily. You will have Divine Life.

Have reverence and faith for the Name. The glory of the Name of God cannot be established through reasoning. But it can certainly be experienced through faith, devotion and constant repetition.

Ever repeat the Name of the Lord. Feel His presence wherever you go. He is in you and you are in Him. Let all the various duties that you discharge be as one continuous prayer to the Lord.

Do all your work as a worship or as an offering unto the Lord. Repeat the Name of the Lord mentally all the time. Remembrance and worship are the potent means of drawing His grace. Whatever may be your occupation, wherever you may go or travel, constantly remember Him and offer all that you do as worship unto Him. You will soon attain Divine Grace.

Live in the awareness of God. Seek the company of saints. The company of saints will inspire you and you will be filled with noble thoughts. They help you to contact God. God is the only thing that is worth seeking in this world. Therefore, cling to his Divine Name.

Yes, You are perfectly correct in saying that the easiest way to attain Him is to remember Him always. In remembering Him you grow in love for Him. To think of the Lord is to draw His grace. In His grace there is fulfilment of the purpose of human birth.

Ever repeat the sacred Name of the Lord. The Divine Name is a powerful spiritual force which can counter and ultimately destroy all obstacles, all forces that oppose the aspirant in his inward path of meditation and prayer. The power of the Name cannot be easily realised unless one keeps deep faith in the Name of God and goes on practising it, and the method of awakening the power of the Name is through proper Bhava.

There is infinite Shakti in Ram Nam. Rama Nama is the remedy for all ills. Therefore, let the sacred Name of the Lord be ever upon your lips.

The sacred and auspicious Name of Siva may be repeated all the times of the day. There is no such restrictions that you should recite only at particular times. For a Sadhaka every moment of his life is precious. Therefore, think of the Lord Siva always besides your morning and evening sittings for Japa. Even in the midst of your work, you can repeat His Name mentally. There is no fixed rule.

The Name of the Lord is the surest remedy for all the ills of life. Not only it removes physical troubles, but also cures Bhava-Roga. Therefore, take the Name of the Lord with faith and devotion. Cling to the Divine Name. The Name of the Lord is great relief and consolation.

Verily, life is temporary, body is perishable, and death is a certainty. But God is a great Reality and while man lives he must seek the Eternal. This is life and its central purpose.

Even when the body is engaged in activities, even then your inner being must contemplate the permanent Reality. Let there be remembrance every moment. Let the Name ever be upon thy tongue. Even daily activity should be a dedication with devotion. The Divine Presence is here and now. Behold the light shining through all forms. Such a life will bring you blessedness, joy and peace.

Let the holy and sacred Name of Rama ever be upon thy lips. Do not forget God even a single moment of your life. Give your mind to God and hands to work.

Be rooted in firm faith. Make God the very centre of your life. Draw strength from prayer. His Divine Name is your support. Chant the Name of the Lord loudly in the morning and night. Let the Divine Name fill the home. May peace, prosperity and blessedness be yours.

Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Pray to the Lord daily. There is no place where God is not. He is everywhere. He is all-pervading. See Him everywhere.

Always feel that every movement of your entire being is a living prayer and adoration to the Divinity that resides within the innermost centre of your being. He is the Antaratman. He shines within us as a Divine Light. You are never away from Him even for a moment. He is ever with you. This is the truth. Japa is the method of keeping up this awareness.

Ever feel the presence of God and ever remember Him and take His Name at all times. Serve man and worship God. Fill thy home with the chant of His Divine Name.

When you do Japa concentrate upon the Mantra. Recite every Mantra clearly. When your mind is restless, you can chant the Mantra a bit loudly so that you alone could hear. When your mind is calm, then you can do Japa of this Mantra mentally. Have a fixed place and Asana. Do not change the place. Keep the place neat and clean.

Constant remembrance of the Lord comes through regular habit. Feel the presence of the Lord wherever you go. Feel His presence in every action you do during the course of the day. Make a

conscious effort to remember God at all times. Associate God's Name with the work you do daily mentally. Take God's Name while you walk, while you sit and while you eat.

Feel that God is the inner ruler who manipulates your mind, body and sense-organs. Feel that I am only an instrument in the hands of God. Feel that God is the doer. Ever remain immersed in the thought of God. Constantly take the sacred Name of the Lord.

Have a stiff bound notebook to write Mantras. Keep the notebook where you do prayers and worship. Observe silence when you write Mantras. Do not entertain any worldly thoughts during Mantra writing. Write the sacred Mantras with Bhava.

Feel the Presence of the Lord wherever you go for God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. He is in you and you are in Him. Feel this by regular Japa and meditation.

Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Remember the Lord always. Have a fixed period for prayers and Japa. Respect elders. Entertain guests. Serve thy neighbour. Lead an ideal life. Be an example to others.

Your godself will find eternal happiness only in God. Trust in Him. Have faith in Him. He will give you all joy and happiness. Lead a life of simplicity and purity. Have fixed hours to practise prayer and Japa. Take His sacred Name constantly. Feel His all-pervading presence wherever you go. God is nearer than your hands and feet. He is nearer than your breath.

Take God's Name always. Rama Nama will cure all the ills of life. Have intense faith in His Name. He and His Name are one and the same. There is no difference. Feel His presence everywhere.

Do your work as the worship of God. Feel the presence of God in your office. Have confidence in yourself. Be kind to one and all. Do not use harsh words. Respect your superior officers. Do not doubt your subordinates. God bless you.

Set apart some fixed period for Japa and meditation. Do Kirtan. Do worship of God. Give your mind to God and hands to work.

See God in every living creature and within you. Feel His presence everywhere. You will experience immense bliss, strength and indescribable joy.

Do not forget God even a single moment of your life. God is the source of strength. Remembrance of God is strength and life.

Be ever repeating the holy Name of the Lord which you like most. Start it now itself. Cultivate intense faith and love for God. Ever long for His Grace. Through regular Japa and meditation the Divine flame grows brighter and brighter.

The Lord is within you. He is seated in the heart of all beings. Whatever you see, hear, touch or feel is God. Happiness comes to him who seeks the happiness of others. Relieve the sufferings of those who are distressed as per your ability.

Always repeat the Name of the Lord. Let His sacred and holy Name ever be upon the lips of all devotees and members of your Branch. God alone is real. This life is meant to attain Him. Therefore, lead a life of simplicity and purity and attain this life's end.

Aspire for Bliss Eternal. Strive to attain Reality. Find God everywhere.

Ever practise the presence of God. Rise up from bed with his sacred Name upon thy lips. Remember Him throughout the day during your activity. Retire to bed with His holy Name on your lips. Such a constant Smaran of the Lord will bring you all peace and happiness.

Start your Japa with right earnest and become a great Japa Yogi. Cling to the Lord's Name. The practice of the constant repetition of the Lord's Name is the greatest of all Yogas in this Kali Yuga. Therefore, acquire the habit of "Ananya Chintan" of the Lord. This will take you to the Lord safely.

Devotion to the Lord is regarded as a very efficacious method of attaining self-realisation. Therefore, cultivate devotion through Japa, prayer, Kirtan, study of Ramayana, Bhagavata and through service of Sadhus and His devotees.

Kindly do not worry that you are not able to visualise the form of your Ishta Devata when you do Japa. When you advance in the path you will achieve this.

Sit in front of the picture of your Ishta Devata. Look at it with a steady gaze for some time. Then close your eyes and bring the form to the mind. Repeated efforts will give you success. Withdraw the mind from worldly thoughts. Develop concentration and attention. Be patient. Take Sattvic diet. Pray. Be regular in Japa. All these will aid you to advance in the spiritual path.

Rishis and Siddhas Visit the Place Where Bhajan is Held

by Paramahansa Dr. Rupnathji

Paramahansa Dr. Rupnathji: "People sit together and sing the names of the Lord with harmony and concord and with Suddha or Divine Bhava. This is Sankirtan... It elevates the mind quickly and intensifies the Bhava to a maximum degree... There must be perfect harmony and concord, one Svara, one Tala, when Sankirtan is conducted. Then only will be joy (Ananda) and elevation of the mind.

"All the members.. should observe Niyamas for their rapid growth. They should do Japa...should observe fasting on Ekadasi, should observe Mouna or vow of silence for two hours daily...

"The first manifestation of God is ether or sound. Sound is the Guna (quality) of ether. Sounds are vibrations. They give rise to definite forms. Each sound produces a form in the visible world and combinations of sound create complicated shapes. The text books of science describe certain experiments which show that notes produced by certain instruments trace out on a bed of sand definite geometrical figures. It is ths demonstrated that rhythmic vibrations give rise to regular geometrical figures. The Hindu books on music tell us that the various muscial tunes, Ragas and Raginis have each a particular shape which the books graphically describe.

“For instance, the Megha Raga is said to bear a majestic figure seated on an elephant. The Basanta Raga is described as a beautiful youth decked with flowers. All this means that the particular Raga or Ragini, when accurately sung, produces aerial etheric vibrations which create the particular shape. This view received corroborations from the experiments carried out by Mrs Watts Hughes, the gifted author of ‘Voice Figure’.

“Thus, the repeated singing of the Name of the Lord gradually builds up forms of the Devas or the special manifestations of the Deity, whom you seek to worship and this serves as a focus to concentrate the benign influence of the Being which, radiating from the centre, penetrates the worshipper of the Kirtanist.

“Sankirtan brings Darshan of God or attainment of divine consciousness in this Kali Yuga...Sankirtan is the easiest, surest, safest, quickest way for attaining God-consciousness.

“If one does Sankirtan from the bottom of one’s heart with full bhava and Prem, even the trees, birds and animals will be deeply influenced... Rishis and Siddhas visit the place where Sankirtan is held.”

“Mental purity will come through constant chanting of the divine name. This is the simplest way. You are trying to cross the ocean of transmigration, the cycle of birth and death. The mantra is the oar of the boat; it is the instrument you use to cross the samsara of your restless mind, with its unending thought waves. The mantra can also be compared to a ladder that you climb to reach the heights of God-realization.”

Question: “Rupnathji, long ago, a spiritual master would put a potential disciple through rigorous tests before giving him a mantra. Rupnathji, You don’t do that. Why do you give us mantras without first testing our competency?”

Rupnathji: “Simply because Rupnathji loves you! How can a father not want to help his children! However incompetent her children may be, a father can only be compassionate towards them. Children, you are Rupnathji’s own, and Rupnathji wants all His children to reach the ultimate goal. This is why he gives you a mantra. You don’t need to analyse the reason; just make use of the mantra by constantly chanting it, and it will take you to the state of realisation.”

“Children, do not forget to always repeat your mantra. In the beginning japa should be done in a low voice. Later it can be done moving the lips slightly. Finally it should be done mentally. Thus japa should be practised constantly with each breath. Then japa will go on even if we don't attend to it, even in sleep.”

“The period of sadhana is like climbing a high mountain. You need a lot of strength and energy. Mountain climbers use a rope to pull themselves up. For you, the only rope is japa. Therefore, children, try to repeat your mantra constantly. Once you reach the peak, you can relax and rest forever.

“It is always advisable to obtain a mantra from a Self-realized master. Until then we may use one of the mantras of our beloved deity like ‘Om Namah Shivaya’, ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya’, ‘Om Namo Narayanaya’, ‘Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare’, ‘Hari Om’, ‘Om Parashaktyai Namaha’, ‘Om Shivashaktyaikya Rupinyai Namaha’ or even the names of Christ, Allah or Buddha.

“Deciding to chant the mantra a certain number of times daily will help foster the japa habit. We should always keep a mala (rosary) with us for doing japa. A rosary can be made of 108, 54, 27, or 18 beads of rudraksha, tulasi, crystals, sandal, gems, etc., with one Guru (main) bead. We should resolve to chant a certain number of rosaries daily. Children, we should always chant the mantra in our minds while walking, travelling or working.

Be Committed to Your Mantra

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

“When Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji gives you a mantra, he sows a seed of spirituality within you.He transmits a part of Himself into your heart. But you have to nurture that seed by meditating, praying and chanting your mantra regularly, without fail. You have to be totally committed. The natural way to get yoghurt is by adding a spoonful of yoghurt to warm milk. Having added the culture, you let it stand for some time, and thus, all the milk is transformed into yoghurt. In the same way, Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji has transmitted part of Himself into you. Now you have to let the milk stand; you have to attain a state of inward stillness by constantly repeating your mantra and doing other spiritual practices. Your entire being will thus be transformed and you will then realise your divine nature.

“First of all, all of us must have love and respect for our mantra, the mantra that was given to us by our master. Always repeat the mantra that was given to you wherever you are, whatever work you are doing irrespective of time and place. Without talking unnecessarily, chant your mantra. Have love for your mantra. These mantras will help us to purify the mind and are vehicles to take us to the Supreme.

“Children, don’t be disheartened if you don’t see results in spite of all your effort. Each chant of the mantra has an effect. You are just not aware of it. Even if you are not achieving one-pointed concentration, you will still benefit by meditating at a regular time. Through constant japa, the impurities in your mind will disappear, without you even being aware of it, and your concentration will increase during meditation.

Write the Mantra Daily

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

“It is a good practice to write at least one page of mantra daily. Many people get better concentration by writing than by chanting. Try also to inculcate in children the habit of chanting and neatly writing the mantra. This will help to improve their handwriting, too. The book in which the mantra is written should not be thrown around; it should be carefully kept in our meditation or shrine room. Perform Mantra Japa with Alertness, never Mechanically

“Do japa with alertness, never mechanically. Each repetition should be like savouring a sweet. In the end, you will reach a state where even if you let go of the mantra, the mantra won’t let go of you.

“The mantra should be chanted with great attention. Focus either on the sound of the mantra or on the meaning; or you can visualise each syllable of the mantra as you chant. You can also visualise the form of your beloved deity while chanting. Decide the total number of times you will chant the mantra each day. This will help you to do japa with determination. But do not chant heedlessly, just to reach a certain target number. The most important thing is that your mind is one-pointed. Using a mala will help you to count and also to maintain your concentration.

The Power of Mantra Japa

by Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

“Both sitting 10 hours with eyes closed and chanting the divine names with concentration for one hour are equal.”

Question: “Father, is it beneficial if one chants mantras even without knowing the meaning?”

Rupnathji : “If you chant your mantra without knowing its meaning, it has its own power. Even then, it is better if it is chanted with shraddha (loving faith) and love. Concentration also is necessary. A mantra will have a special power if it is received from a Satguru, rather than choosing it oneself. Once you get into a bus or train, it will take you to the destination even if you don’t know who the driver is or which company manufactured the bus or train or from where the spare parts are available. It will drop you at the nearest bus or railway station, and from there it will be only a short distance to your home. Similarly, a mantra will carry you to the threshold of God-realization. From there you can easily reach the ultimate goal.”

Is God Partially Impartial or Impartially Partial?

The Lord, who advises against any feelings of likes and dislikes (Gita Chap 3: 34), and who also says that one should not be swayed by raga-dvesa, i.e., to treat everyone equally (Bhagavatam 4:20:13), and goes even a step further to proclaim that He has an even outlook towards all, i.e., He regards all living beings alike (Gita Chap 9:29), however says nine times in the Gita that there are some people who are very dear to Him:

Dear to Him

Let us see whether we fall within any one of the categories He has given:

1. Gita 7:17— Sri Krishna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

a. One who is steadfast, devoted to Him (the Wise man, that is)

2. Gita 12:14— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who has santosh,
- b. One who does not have vikshepa,
- c. One who practises his conviction,
- d. One who has control over his senses, and
- e. One who has dedicated everything (mind and intellect) to God.

3. Gita 12:15: Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who never injures anyone in any way,
- b. One who is indifferent to everything (including injuries) of the world, and
- c. One who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety.

[Note: Srimad Bhagavatam 11:7:10 talks about such a person too: such a person has the conclusive knowledge of the Vedas, and especially puts that into practice--- He, therefore, perceives the Self in everything; he hates none and loves none. He becomes dear to all living beings]

4. Gita 12:16— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who is free from dependence,
- b. One who is indifferent to the body, the senses, the objects of the senses and their mutual connections,
- c. One who cultivates virtues,
- d. One who is efficient,
- e. One who is disinterested,
- f. One who is fearless,
- g. One who is equipoise,
- h. One who does not do anything for personal aggrandizement,
- i. One who abides in His Will,

- j. One who has no raga-dvesa, and
- k. One who has done isvara-pranidhana (surrendered)

5. Gita 12:17— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who is unflappable, sangfroid, and
- b. One who has abnegated everything to the care of the Lord

6. Gita 12:19— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who is impervious to censure and accolades,
- b. One who is equipoise,
- c. One who cherishes silence,
- d. One who has controlled his thoughts, and
- e. One who is abstemious.

7. Gita 12:20— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who follows His dharma,
- b. One who has unshaken faith,
- c. One whose goal is God.

[Note: Read the above with what He has declared in Uddhava Gita: "There are many created bodies such as those with one, two, three, four, or many legs, as well as without legs; of these the human body is My favourite." (Uddhava Gita 2:22 or Bhagavatam 11:7:22)]

8. Gita 18:65— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dear to Him:

- a. One who has a concentrated mind,
- b. One who has dedicated everything to Him,

- c. One who chants,
- d. One whose body, mind and intellect work for Him,
- e. One who has surrendered.

9. Gita 18:69— Sri Krsna says one who has the following qualities is dearest to Him:

- a. One who preaches the Gita to His devotees.

Mutually Contradictory

But you must be wondering after reading the first three slokas in the first paragraph whether there is an unforgivable contradiction in the Lord's assertions: that He regards all living beings alike yet considers someone dear to Him.

This is precisely the same question that King Pariksit had in mind, and had asked Sukadev Gosvami when the former discerned the seeming partiality in the Lord. Thus, he catechised Sukadev Gosvami about the doubt: ".....Viṣṇu, being everyone's well-wisher, is equal and extremely dear to everyone. How, then, did He become partial like a common man for the sake of Indra and thus kill Indra's enemies? How can a person equal to everyone be partial to some and inimical toward others? (Bhagavatam 7:1:1)

An obvious spiritual anomaly: Can the Lord, who has been described as "the friend of all beings" (= suhridam sarvabhootaanaam) [Gita 5:29] concurrently be relentless towards someone or something—that is King Pariksit's misgiving.

Disinterested God

The Great Voice of Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

The Lord responds according to the nature of things for "He dwells in the hearts of all beings" (Eeshwarah sarvabhootaanaam hriddesherjuna tishthati) [Gita 18:61] What anyone or anything demonstrates as a result of His response is his or its intrinsic nature, and not that of the Lord.

Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji explains that the Lord is “like the fire. Just as fire removes the cold of those who draw near it, but not of those who keep away from it, even so (does He) bestow (His) Grace on (His) devotees, but not, as ignorant people may believe owing to any kind of attachment on (His) part. Just as the light of the sun, though pervading everywhere, is reflected only in a clean mirror and not in a pot, so also (He)... being present everywhere, manifests (Himself) only in those from whose minds all kinds of impurities, accumulated on account of ignorance, have been removed through their sincere love and devotion... The sun has neither attachment to the mirror nor hatred for the pot.... He bestows the desired object only on those who go near Him.” (Purport to Gita 9:29)

Assuming a dog-owner has two dogs. When he returns home, his dog called Albert scurries to him, and licks him all over. His other dog, Santha, looks on docilely, taking in the scene quite disinterestedly. The owner neither has any partiality towards Albert nor any aversion towards Santha; yet, he pets Albert on his head and compliments him, and says a “hullo” to his Santha. He does not deprive Santha of her rights to her food and comfort and neither does he increase Albert’s share of food and comfort because of his affectionate nature. If he is such, then, he would have disowned Santha long ago. He understands Santha’s nature and leaves her be.

When rain water collects in an unbroken pot, yet flows through the cracks in another that is broken, the fault, in the case of the second pot, is not the rain’s but the pot’s.

The Founder-acarya of the Yoga Dhyana Movement, Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji, has given a good analogy that further explains the anomaly. “.....an electrician connects both a heater and a cooler to the same electrical energy. The cause of the heating and cooling is the electrician’s manipulation of the electrical energy according to his desire, but factually the electrician has nothing to do with causing heat or cold, nor with the enjoyment or suffering that results.” (Purport to Bhagavatam 7:1:12)

That is why the impartial Lord accepts even the most sinful person when he begins to worship Him with an undivided heart. (Gita 9:30) Even (“api”) the vilest becomes a deserving soul when his nature changes. And His undifferentiated Grace naturally flows without any prejudice.