

THE ETERNAL SEARCH



Swami Ananda

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Swami Ananda
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MAA

Asato Ma Sat Gamaya
Tamaso Ma Jyotir Gamaya
Mrityor Ma Amritam Gamaya

Lead me from unreality to Reality
Lead me from darkness to Light
Lead me from death to Immortality



Her Holiness, Maa Bhavamayee Paramahansa

- Publisher's Note -

We are happy to present this book entitled The Eternal Search to our devotees and all interested seekers.

Dibyadham Yogashram has been offering retreats for spiritual seekers from overseas during specific periods of the year. During these retreats, Swami Ananda has been giving discourses about spirituality and conveying the message of the Holy Mother.

This book is a collection of a series of seven talks given by Swamiji to an audience of Japanese aspirants, who attended an introductory Yoga retreat at Tapovan Ashram, Puri district, Orissa, in August 1998. The talks were edited and first published in the Dibyadham Annual Souvenir 2000-2001 and the Dibyadham Newsletter (April – August 2000 editions). They were further revised by the author for the present publication in book form, keeping in mind the practical needs for spiritual preparations of the aspirants living both in and outside the Ashram. This booklet is an essential guide for those who want to reap full benefits of staying in the Ashram community and who want to pursue the spiritual path further. We also recommend that this book be read as a part of the preliminary preparation before visiting the Ashram.

The aim of this book is to help the aspirant on this

spiritual path towards the goal of Self-Realisation. It begins with an explanation of the reasons behind man's "eternal search" and the meaning of spiritual awakening. It then goes on to say that having come to the awareness of the need for something else in life, the guidance of a Realised Master is most essential for pursuing the search further. This search or journey is called sadhana. The mechanisms behind sadhana are elucidated in the book as a transformative process of mind, desire and action. For this transformation to take place, the company of the wise - satsang - is a necessary step. The book then goes on to say that there are two main paths in sadhana, the path of devotion and the path of denial, and that both lead to the same transcendental goal of a universal consciousness. The concluding chapter shows how both grace and effort are needed to reach the final end. In every chapter, Swami Ananda gives a clear step-to-step guide about different aspects of spirituality.

We sincerely hope that all spiritual aspirants would benefit from this book. We dedicate this book to them.

In humble service of our holy Guru, Sri Maa.

-Dibyadham Yogashram-

- About the Holy Mother -

Her Holiness Maa Bhabamayee Paramahansee was born on 23rd February 1932 in a Brahmin family of a small village in the district of Cuttack in Orissa. She was the first child of Her parents and the only daughter in the family.

The ‘Mother’ began to manifest Her divinity when She was still quite young, but it was not until the age of eighteen that some divine revelations confirmed to her parents that their daughter was destined for higher things. These divine revelations lasted for a period of one year and during this year the family members and many others witnessed many miraculous happenings.

After these divine occurrences, the ‘Mother’ lived in seclusion devoting Her entire time to spiritual practices, meditation and scriptural studies. Having spent some years in intense spiritual practices and almost a year in complete seclusion and deep contemplation, ‘Mother’ received a divine instruction to travel North to the foothills of the Himalayas. She was to go to Rishikesh, to the ashram of His Holiness Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a renowned Master. Having received formal initiation from Swamiji Maharaj, She stayed at His ashram on the banks of the holy river Ganges for a year.

Subsequently, She was advised by Her holy Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to spend the rest of Her days in Puri. The hermitage named Dibyadham Yogashram where She spent the rest of Her spiritual life gradually became the home for Her disciples. Like a flower's sweet perfume that naturally attracts bees, the 'Mother's' divine love and ethereal spiritual presence attracted many to Her feet. People could sense the fragrance of divinity as soon as they stepped into the entrance of the hermitage.

Irrespective of nationality and religion, many seekers from India as well as from abroad have come to take refuge at Her feet, seeking Her guidance in order to seriously strive for the highest welfare of God Realisation. The 'Mother' has provided this precious opportunity for all of those who by great fortune have found themselves at Her door.

After having given everything of Herself selflessly till Her last breath for the sake of Her spiritual children and for mankind in general, the 'Mother' finally attained Mahaprayana and returned to Her eternal abode on 3rd May 2002. She keeps transmitting Her divine energy and message for the welfare of humanity. The 'Mother's' divine presence continues to permeate the Ashram, radiating peace and unconditional love. Her blessings continue to be showered upon all Her disciples and devotees, inspiring them to go forward on the spiritual path. A shrine is to be built within the precincts of the Ashram over the place where Her physical body has been laid to rest.

-Prologue -

Today people are definitely searching more than ever before. This is because material development which people of this age expected would fulfil everything has not done so. It has taken care of some basic needs and given man physical comforts but somehow deprived man of something very essential. The words of the Bible, “Man cannot live by bread alone” has proved very true.

Material and technological development has not only failed to deliver what man expected it would, but more perplexing is the fact that it has brought in it's wake innumerable problems and complications to which he has no answers and solutions. However much we might broadcast our present day progress and well being, we cannot overlook the fact that human society as a whole has become degenerate and stands on the brink of a dark abyss. This is very evident in today's art, music, in the sphere of human thoughts and the manifold absurdities of his actions. Where the next step will lead no one yet knows. There are fears that man's greed, competition and uncontrolled desires might even lead this planet to total annihilation.

In this present context there is indeed an urgent necessity for man to search for alternatives and in this decade the search

PROLOGUE

has taken many forms and followed diverse avenues – from supernatural, fantastical, magical, to extraterrestrial. Some are sincerely reviewing again the legends, myths and sciences of primitive races and cultures, such as the Mayas and the Hopis, which the White Man in his greed for power and monopoly had tried to suppress and even eradicate. Whatever the direction of today's search, it is mostly outward. Man is trying to look for the answer outside himself, and Time will show where these researches will finally arrive at.

But there are a very few who are willing to follow this search into themselves. It is not just today that some are making this inner journey, trying to climb the steps to that door within. In every age from the very beginning of the creation of this human race there have always been a blessed few who have followed this path and arrived at that final goal. They are definitely the ones who hold the solutions to the puzzle of life and of the life beyond.

This booklet, *The Eternal Search*, is for those who are desirous of directing their search inward, to make the inner journey towards that goal Eternal.

May the grace of the Masters in human and astral forms and of that Primal Being who is the Source and Support of All be showered on those who are struggling to make this inner journey, trying to find the answer within.

Hari Om.

Swami Ananda

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The Eternal Search

Man has been eternally searching, and his search seems almost endless. Man is exploring through science and through different fields of knowledge into this mystery of creation, trying to delve into the depths of human potentiality. But this search doesn't end. It will not end unless man realises the other aspects of his own being.

There are mainly the two aspects of this creation by the combination of which this manifested world has come into existence¹. Human history - the history of desire, passion, pleasure, pain, war, victory - concerns only one aspect of man's being. But the mediocrity of humanity has accepted only this one aspect of itself, that is, the material aspect of existence, as the real, concrete and final.

This material aspect of human beings is the mind in interaction with the world of gross elements. This is only the psychophysical aspect of man. But because it is the most evident - as we can see it with our eyes, hear it with our ears, taste with our mouth and touch with our hands - it seems the most concrete.

1 The world came into existence by the combination of matter and spirit. A human being is a combination of these two aspects also.

This is what we consider to be all of our existence; and usually we are satisfied with it. We do not want to explore into anything else, to see whether there is something more to our being and to our existence. And because of conjunction of awareness with the body and the material world, we spend all our time in only receiving material impulses from our senses - eating, sleeping, copulating - spending all our human efforts only to add to our physical comforts - collecting money, building houses and the rest of it. Sometimes there is pleasure in these things. Sometimes there is pain. Sometimes there is frustration, boredom, and loneliness. Desire, greed, anger, meetings and partings, is our history. This is the history of most men.

But there is another history - a history of those few superior men who have risen beyond this and who have explored that higher aspect of existence. It is this tradition that we have here in India. It is a tradition, which has been passed down to us by a few who have been brave enough to get out of this normal existence and find something else. It is a tradition, which luckily we still have here, in this country. And this tradition has influenced the life-style and the thinking of the people here for millions of years. Though now it is diminishing, it is still here as a living tradition. These few men who have contacted that other aspect have made it real for us. This aspect which we cannot see, which we cannot know by our senses, which we cannot cognise with our minds and which we cannot express by speech. Having experienced it, having contacted it, and having united with it, and having become it, they have brought it from those ethereal levels to this human level, and they have said

that it is possible for you, me, and everybody to contact ‘That’. And they have boldly declared to humanity, “It is your birthright to know this higher divine aspect. This divinity is your true essence. Each one of you, each being, each particle of creation is pervaded with the presence of this divinity.”

By knowing this divine aspect in you, by contacting it and becoming it, you rise beyond darkness. You go beyond the duality of this existence. Divinity is your real nature, your true nature. I was telling in the class in the morning, Yoga is to unite with this true nature. What we know of ourselves, is not all of ourselves and it is not our essential nature. Our seemingly endless search is to find that pure nature, to contact it and become it. And those who have contacted it have said, - by knowing this essential nature of yours, by becoming it, your search will end; the process of transmigration will come to a stop.

The process of knowing this divine nature is what is called spirituality. Spirituality is directly contacting and experiencing this divine nature and not only believing and having faith in it. They have said believe in it, but do not stop there, experience it also. By experiencing that divine aspect you realise all that which you have been looking for - perfect bliss, total freedom, complete peace and final rest. And the beauty of what they have said is that it exists not only in the higher heavens somewhere in the stars, but it is here present in you. The closer you get to the true essence of your own being, the more and more you begin to understand the mystery of this creation.

Thus, by knowing one’s true nature one rises beyond this

endless cycle of births and deaths, appearances and disappearances. One goes beyond this duality of pleasure and pain and reaches that unity in which one finds completeness. This unity which is our essential nature is what has been called the Buddha state, the Brahmic Consciousness and also Moksha. Every being is searching for that liberating essence. Great is the fortune of that jiva - the phenomenal being - when it can be aware of what it is really looking for.

By Mother's grace, your stay here somehow or the other will awaken in you the awareness of the true purpose of this human life. So that some part of your life's effort, you will learn to direct towards this end. You are already doing it in your own way, because you are fortunate to have someone who has taken this science of Yoga to you and you are already doing something. But I hope you become clearer about what is that end towards which you should direct your efforts. May the blessings of my Guru, the Holy Mother, be showered on you.

Hari Om.

The Necessity of Guru's Guidance

When this jiva has accumulated impressions of good actions called suva-samskara, the awareness of the true aim of life dawns in him. Only then does he realise that human life is not only for eating, sleeping, copulating, accumulating, fearing, grasping, possessing, decaying and dying. There is a tendency in every being to grasp on to material beings and to possess things, such as power, wealth, qualifications, name, fame and honour. Besides the tendency for survival the jiva, being separated from its true essence, feels a sense of emptiness and fear, so it grasps and clings to material objects and beings for identity, security, support and joy. This search for pleasure and security and clinging to it is the process which is usually known as life.

After having some awareness of the true aim of life by the force of one's good samskara,² also through the blessings and grace of great souls, what is the jiva supposed to do? Some people were asking Mother, "What should I do? What is my role in life? How can I feel God's joy?" So what should we do? What is the way? Being aware of this higher aim in life is not sufficient. Because

2 *Samskara*: accumulate impressions and actions of past lives

simply realising that all the things and pursuits of this world are useless and worthless is not enough, if one doesn't find a way to go beyond them and learn to direct one's life's efforts towards a higher end.

The way to free oneself, to release oneself from the entanglements of this world, to rise above body and mind and to reach out towards a higher Reality, is what we call sadhana. Sadhana means 1) practice - the practice to purify one's self to free oneself from the limitations of body and mind. It also means 2) a way. It is the way by which we can throw off the covers that limit us, and realise our true nature - the true nature that is infinite, complete, pure and blissful. But before we start on this path of sadhana, we must first ask, "Which is the best way that is suitable for a particular individual?" Secondly, to walk further on we have to know how far we have already covered, because this is probably not the first time we are coming to this path. Maybe we have walked on it in other lives. So these are two vital points to be answered before we can start - which is the particular path suitable for one and how far one has already come on this path.

Then, we ask "How am I to tread this path? What aids do I need to walk upon this road? What is there on this path? Is it a straight and plain road? Or is it a road of stones, pebbles and thorns?" Sadhana does not only involve walking steadily on this path, it also means fighting and struggling. Not fighting with the forces outside us, like in our so-called civilised world today where we have developed many methods and machines to fight outer forces, such as other beings, and we have also learnt to change

material circumstances and make them suitable to our tastes. It is not that. The fight is with ourselves and within us. The fight or struggle is with our own mind, with this false self of ours which we have built. It is easier to fight things that are outside us, with the things that we can see. But it is much more difficult to fight things which are inside us, which involve us, which are almost parts of ourselves and things which we cannot see.

So it is very evident that before we start on this venture of sadhana, we need some help, some guidance. Not only some help, but a lot of help. The One who is to help us on this path, the One who is to hold our hands while we totter on this path and take our first steps is whom we call 'Guru'. The One who will show us the path and give us the directions and our bearings, who will throw light on our path as we walk and also hold our hands when necessary, is the holy Guru.

Guru is One who has reached the end of this journey, who has reached that destination, who has contacted that Ultimate Truth and has become One with It. And having become One with that essence of Creation, the Venerable One is also in union with the soul of each being. Thus, He or She knows the limitations of every soul and knows us better than we know ourselves. He or She knows our past, thus also can guide us to a better future. The Guru knows every turn and every pothole on this path. He or She knows how much of the path we have already covered, how much further we have to go, and which direction a particular soul has to take in order to reach the goal or to return to its eternal abode.

So, if we were to walk on this path in order to get out of

this darkness or dream of ignorance, we would need the help of a Guru, who is an ethereal being, a being of light, who has come out here to guide us, to show us the way and to cast His/Her own light on our paths. The Guru is One who having become that light chooses to take on the limitations of this human body, to stretch out His or Her hand towards beings that are in darkness and to take them from the darkness of this world to the spheres of light. Guru is One who instils something of His or Herself into us. Guru gives us the possibility to walk on this path and opens the doors of the higher worlds.

How does the Guru do this? By awakening the powers within us, by destroying our delusion by His/Her teachings, by inspiring us, by putting our inner spiritual body in order and by instilling in us a part of His/Her divine light. The Guru does all this by the authority of His or Her unity with the Ultimate Truth - God. Probably the Guru gives us a word or a mantram. But that word that Guru gives is not just a word. It is a seed. It is the seed that is implanted in us, and which by our efforts will sprout, grow and bear fruits. The process of tending the seed that Guru has implanted in us, of watering it, giving it light and protection, is what is called sadhana.

On this spiritual path, some can choose to make some efforts by themselves, but unless this seed is there, the tree will not sprout, and the fruit of joy cannot be relished. The purpose of walking on this path, of going through this process of sadhana, is to grow from the pleasure of our little sense joys to a greater joy and finally into Bliss. And to be able to do that the enlightened 'Guru'

is most necessary for planting that seed and for guiding us in tending that seed, making it into a tree that has leaves, flowers and fruits. The leaves that will protect us from the heat of this worldly existence, the flowers that will fill us with the fragrance of devotion and the fruit that will be the bliss of Realisation.

Tomorrow we will go on to the details of sadhana. Today I have touched on this aspect of Guru, the most necessary and primary aspect without which sadhana is not possible. Without the Guru our search is a dissipation of energy. Without the Guru's support and grace, it is indeed difficult to walk on this path. We are just like a child who at every step of its growth needs the help of its Mother.

Hari Om. Guru Narayana.

What is Sadhana?

- Mind, Desire and Action-

(Avidya, Kamya, Karma)

We are to discuss sadhana in this satsang. Sadhana, in short, means to make white, that is, to make ourselves pure and transparent and remove all impurities within so that we can manifest that pure light within us. Sadhana is the practice that is followed and the means that is used to remove these impurities. As we are not transparent and our vehicles are not pure enough, we are not able to feel the presence of the Spirit within us. We are not able to feel Its light, bliss and peace and manifest It in our lives. That is why we suffer from the pain of duality, instead of feeling the joy of unity.

What are these impurities within that prevent us from knowing this essential nature, the essence of bliss within us? These impurities are the impressions and desires that we have been collecting through our actions and experiences. These desires and impressions prevent us from seeing things as they are and from knowing ourselves as we really are. I will give an example of what these desires and impressions are and how they are formed. I will

also give an example of how they work to distort our vision.

Let us take the example of something that is very basic - food. Someone gives you some sweets or a fruit. You look at it and eat it. After you have eaten it, there is a comment that the mind makes for instance that it is sweet. Then there comes a judgement about it, whether it is good or bad, and then an opinion about whether it is desirable or undesirable. All this is fed into the computer of your mind.

All this is the information that you collected regarding the object you ate. The next time you see this object, immediately there comes the judgement of whether it is good or bad. Sometimes the conscious mind does not even notice this because this process is so quick. Then, there comes the idea “I want” or “I do not want”. The next time you are looking at this object, you are not really looking at it. You are looking at what your mind is saying or projecting, and your action proceeds from the impulse or desire to accept or reject. Your whole idea and attitude towards the object come from a mind that is conditioned by previous impressions.

In this way, all the experiences in this world are the outcomes of our programmed mind. They are programmed with the opinions and judgements of previous experiences. That is why we do not see things as they are. We only see things through this conditioned and programmed mind. That is why in Buddhism it is said that in order to attain that pure light, you need to look at things through the pure mind. Then only can you see the Reality.

There are layers and layers of these impressions that have been collected in the mind. These layers of impressions are what

we call samskara. These samskaras influence our actions, our way of looking, reacting and acting. These samskaras are built up through our karmas - our actions. Desire is a two-way current, namely of acceptance and rejection. There are some things that we want and some things that we do not want. Some things we are seeking, other things we are avoiding. Desire colours everything by like and dislike and thus influences our every activity.

For instance, someone was asking a question today. The question was “Suppose we see a handsome man, or a beautiful woman and we feel attraction. What do we do?” This attraction or beauty is not in that person. It is the desires in us that make those things beautiful and attractive. If you analyse it properly, use vichara and ask yourself, “What is it that is actually beautiful? Is it not the cover of the skin that is beautiful? And within it what is there?” We do not use this vichara because we are blinded by our desires. We are blinded by this colour which desire puts on things. We are influenced by a fixed idea that a woman is enjoyable so desirable we do not see anything else. That is why as long as we have not cleaned ourselves from these desires, we do not see things as they really are.

For example, there is a pool of water with fish swimming about inside. Now, someone who relishes eating fish comes around and looks at that pool of water and these fish. Maybe there is a lotus blooming there and the water is very clean with these fish swimming about; there probably is a sense of beauty in this whole thing. But he will not see any of this. He will only see that there is fish and that it will be good when it is cooked in the kitchen and

put on his table.

Take another example. Suppose you are driving in a car. Many people and many cars pass you by on the road. You do not take note of them. But suppose there is a particular car you would like to possess or a beautiful face to which you are attracted, then that particular car or face will leave an imprint in your mind; you will probably remember that car or that face for days. That is what attraction does. It creates the chain of desire that distorts or colours your vision, your thinking and influences your action.

So, all these things that we perceive and our senses contact are actually perceived by us with a programmed and conditioned mind. What we are seeing is our mind being reflected and projected back to us. The desires are putting a cover and preventing us from seeing the things as they are. It is like a rope that is lying on the road and appears like a snake. This is an example of something unreal and non-existing being superimposed on something real, just like the manifoldness of this Creation superimposed on the Spirit that is One and only.

What are these desires doing in our mind? They are creating vikshepa, that is, restlessness. We are caught in these two currents of raga and dvesha, likes and dislikes, wanting and rejecting. Every moment the mind is influenced by this duality; that is why it is always in a state of restlessness. This restlessness is constantly propelling us into an action of wanting or rejecting. Could you ever have guessed that there is this whole process behind your actions which you think you are doing out of your free choice?

Is this not what our life is? Have you ever analysed it? If you analyse it properly, you will see how these currents are always working inside you. We are helplessly being propelled into action by these currents. Actually we are not choosing to do anything.

Those who have mastered the mind, those who have mastered these two currents of duality of like and dislike, those who have neither attractions nor repulsions, acceptance nor rejection, are the ones who really have choice. But the rest of us are only being propelled by our desires. Sometimes we make excuses for our own desires by saying, “We have to do something for the world.”, as if the world is in great need of us.

Please do not presume I am telling you that you should not do things for others. Neither am I criticising people who are doing these things which is called service. You should do these things. Because it is by doing these sattwic actions that you will undo your tamasic desires. I am telling you this so that you will understand the dynamics of mind, desire and action, see how it works, how we are caught in it and how it prevents us from going deeper into ourselves.

What we call life is only an existence on the very surface of our being. Like living on the outskirts of a palace, which is ours. As long as we are pleased with walking around in the gardens looking at the outside of this palace, this mundane life is all right. But maybe there will come a stage when you will want to enter this palace and discover the treasures that are inside. Then you have to give up this attraction for the outside, turn your steps towards the palace doors and find the key to open it. That is what sadhana is -

to develop some detachment for the outside and turn our activities a little inward towards opening the doors of that palace.

So, in brief, first of all the impurity of desires accumulated through actions and experiences of the past cloud or obstruct our vision, distorting it. Secondly, by generating the dual currents of like and dislike, acceptance and rejection, they keep the mind in a state of constant restlessness and movement, propelling our energy outward and thus preventing deeper introspection. Sadhana is the removal of both this clouding effect and restlessness. It is the gradual wiping out of samskaras - the accumulated impressions and desires.

How did this grossness and restlessness initially come about? It is because of the conjunction of Spirit with matter, because of the limitation of consciousness through identification with the body and prakriti. Thus it is the influence of the gunas or qualities of prakriti on consciousness. Prakriti or the Creative Principle has projected this creation by interweaving the three gunas or three strings of sattwa, rajas and tamas.

Inertness, grossness and darkness are the qualities of tamas which the gross body is. Restlessness and activity are the qualities of rajas, and they are mainly the products of the non-subdued mind. As our individual consciousness is mostly identified and limited by the body and mind, we are usually functioning from the two most basic levels of tamas and rajas. That is why there is grossness and restlessness. Sometimes a little light and calmness of the sattwic state filters in, but we cannot hold on to it for long, remain in it or really relish it.

Sadhana is the way to rise above the lower two gunas of tamas and rajas and manifest the sattwa. It is to transform the level of our awareness from the basic levels of tamasic-ness and rajasic-ness to sattwic-ness. It is to rise from inertia and restlessness, to the clarity, purity and tranquility of sattwa. This is true evolution. True growth is neither the growth of the body nor the expansion of the mind. True progress is rising from the tamasic and rajasic level to the sattwic level. We rise from the tamasic level, that is, the inanimate state or the animal state, through rajas or activity. Activity is a higher state than inertia, but it is not the final state. Today we have wrongly built up constant activity as the desirable and highest state. But that is not the ultimate state of our evolution. We have to rise also from the rajasic state of desires and result orientated activity to the sattwic state, of tranquility, equipoise and light and even go beyond it.

That is what sadhana is. Tomorrow I will come to the technique that is employed in order to rise from this tamasic and rajasic state to the sattwic state. This technique used to remove the impurities inside us - the impurities of desire - which covers and limits our consciousness, prevents us from seeing the real nature of things and knowing the real nature of our being.

I expect you will get a basic idea of what sadhana is from what I have been telling you. When we speak of sadhana, we speak of this process. If we are naturally in that pure transparent state, and if there is neither the restlessness of desire nor the darkness of tamas within us, then sadhana would not be necessary. If we were not identified with our body sadhana would not be necessary. If we

have risen above all desires and we have only one exclusive desire for God, then sadhana would not be necessary. But as long as we are identified with this body, as long as we have manifold desires inside us, we have to do sadhana. If we want to manifest our higher aspect and the greater potentialities that are within us then sadhana is necessary. Because in essence we are not this limited body or this mind, but we are a principle much beyond these two.

Some were saying that doing sadhana seems rather selfish because it is for our own betterment; should we not be doing things in the world instead? First of all as long as you have not helped yourself; as long as you are in darkness there is very little of worth that you can do for others. But in actuality as long as Maha-Maya, the Divine Mother - the Creatrix of the Worlds - wants you all to go on in this world, you will do so. No one can stop you. Sri Ramakrishna once said, if you were sleeping in this room, and you knew that there was a lot of treasure in the other room, and that you could have some of this, would you sleep well at night? Or would you not be thinking, "When will I get my hands on that treasure?" If you knew what the treasure you were hiding inside was, then would you waste a moment of your time in any other pursuit but to get it? As long as you are not really aware of the inner treasure you will go on with these high-sounding things of universal good and so on. Sri Aurobindo once said, "Only if you had the taste of that Divine Bliss once, you would leave everything behind, so intoxicating and absorbing is that experience."

So for the time being, do your duties in the world, but will you not direct some of your effort towards finding this treasure that

you are hiding inside you? The unprepared mind has many queries, such as duty, responsibility, and many other things. That is all right, but I will ask you one question. Suppose a person falls deeply in love and his parents do not want that relationship. What does he do? Does he pay any attention to all the social restrictions, to what is proper, what his duty and responsibility is and all the things that his parents say? Or does he run away with the one he likes?

That is what the wise are advising us to do in connection with God. Start cultivating a little love for God and may be that love will reach that intense state when all our duties towards the world will drop off naturally because we will get so caught up in that love, so intoxicated with it that all these duties and responsibilities will not matter anymore. So start cultivating it now, because we cannot immediately reach that state. Be in the world; at the same time start cultivating a little love for God. And maybe one day it will grow to that state when all these duties and obligations will not matter any more. You will not even be conscious of these things when you reach that state.

Hari Om. May our compassionate Mother bless you all with a little of this love for God.

Satsang

- The Company of the Knowers of Truth -

Today we will discuss the technique of sadhana. There are mainly two streams or schools of sadhana. One is divinisation and the other is denial. Whereas in one there is cultivation of love or attachment to God, in the other detachment is given more prominence. Though these two processes appear to oppose each other, both finally reach the same end. The means may differ but the goal to be attained is the same.

Whether one chooses the path of divinisation or that of denial, both are equally difficult to tread. The aspirant should be well prepared and armoured to fight the distracting forces within him or her. At first the sadhak has to have a clear understanding of what he or she is venturing into, then try to develop true determination and desire to reach the end. There are many who start on this process of sadhana out of curiosity, but after having walked just a few steps and having made little progress either turn back or sit by the roadside. They are held back by attractions for wine, women, wealth, name and fame.

Now, how can we develop a clear understanding, a firm determination and a strong desire to attain the goal? You all probably know from Buddha's life that when He sat under the bodhi tree He was afflicted by many temptations and fears, but He had said with firmness, "Whatever may happen, I will not budge an inch from here." This firm determination and this kind of strong desire to achieve the end was built up through a process of many lives and not just in one life.

We may not possess perfect clarity or all the required qualities in the beginning but even then if we start on the path, our efforts will not be wasted though we may not reach the final end in this life. In each life the jiva is collecting material, building up certain qualities of character that will be suitable and aid him/her on this path to the highest end.

One of the ways in which we can build up clarity and determination is through satsang. Satsang means the company of those who know the Truth, the company of the true lovers of God, and the company of the Realised. What does this company of the wise and the holy do? We have a saying that, "You take on the colour of the company you keep." The kind of company you keep influences you, and finally you want to become that. A young artist keeps the company of other artists - maybe master artists - for the sake of developing his art. The lifestyle of master artists, their qualities, talents and skills influence the young artist and inspire him to grow towards these ideals. So, the company of those who seek God arouses the desire for God, the desire to attain liberation, to find that Ultimate Goal and to contact one's true nature and also a desire

to lead a life like them. The way they live, the way they do their practices and their ideals influence our lives so that we also want to develop those qualities and become like them.

It is like when young boys see films. They like to imitate those personalities that appear on the screen. There is a tendency of the mind to imitate, to do as one sees others do. So, the best way and the easy way to develop love for God and the determination to reach that goal is to be in the company of those who are aspiring for that Goal or those who have already attained that goal. There is a verse in the Ramayana that without Satsang, proper discrimination cannot be developed and without the grace of God the opportunity for satsang or the company of the wise and holy does not come.

We do not even question the way we live. We are not aware of the imperfections of our life unless we come in contact with those who have contacted some other Reality and are aspiring for better and more perfect life. When we see people around us living in a certain way and many others also doing the same, we accept that this is what all of life is about and that there is no other possibility. Only the company of the wise gives you a glimpse into another dimension and opens you up to other possibilities. You become aware that there is the possibility of moulding life differently, with different aims, attitudes and values.

When you are in the company of the wise, you hear about God, you see holy people, you see images of God, you hear His Names and you eat the food offered to God; all these serve to purify the mind and to build up a sattvic mind. In very subtle ways, the love for God begins to be aroused in you and so also

the determination to reach the Ultimate Goal. Like a disease that gets transmitted by invisible ways, so also this love for God, or the intense desire called sraddha also gets transmitted invisibly through the company of the Realised and the Wise. By listening to the teachings and discussions, proper discrimination between the real and unreal that which is truly conducive or detrimental is awakened in you.

Having the opportunity of being in the company of the Wise, the Good and the Realised is the result of our good actions in the past and also the grace of the Lord. Gradually, the desire for God and the desire for liberation is aroused in us by being amongst the company of holy people and also by going to holy places, which we call pilgrimage. This is the true purpose of pilgrimage. When we go to holy places, we find people praying and doing spiritual activities. This collected energy of spiritual activities and prayers somehow influences us and we also want to do likewise. When you are beside the Ganges, you see people lighting lamps and offering flowers. Everyone is doing something. Some are bathing to purify themselves. There the whole aim of life becomes, “How I will gather some merits”, “How I will purify myself” and “How I will develop love for God”. That seems to be the concern of every pilgrim there; so this collective vibration influences us. And for a moment we forget our other pursuits and we also take a dip to purify ourselves, light a lamp, or offer some flowers. Consciously or unconsciously, these vibrations influence us and are transmitted to us.

You who are here in this satsang have done both these things. You have made a pilgrimage. Your journey from Japan has

been a pilgrimage. In India, pilgrimages involve some physical difficulties. These physical difficulties are for some spiritual gains. You have also incurred some physical difficulties here. That is why I say that your trip here has been a pilgrimage, and your stay here has been satsang. You have lived in holy company, you have heard of God, and I'm sure you have also thought of God and the ultimate aim of life. You have heard, you have thought and you have sung His Names, so your entire stay here has been a satsang.

This is the way this soul, this jiva develops the desire for that Supreme Goal, the desire for Liberation. Drop by drop, little by little. Gradually this deposit grows and in one life you either feel detachment from the world by realising the meaninglessness of this mundane life, or you feel devotion for God. If you feel detachment towards the world, dispassion for this world, and if you understand the meaninglessness of this life of only eating, sleeping, copulating, fearing and dying, then you take to the path of denial.

But maybe at first, you do not feel dispassion for the world. It is not necessary that you feel this. Every soul has its own way, according to its stage of development and according to the path it has followed in the past lives. Maybe at first you feel devotion towards God. You feel love towards God. You will then take the path of divinisation, of devotion and love. I say you take, but actually it is not really that way because you do not know where you stand. So the Master guides you. The Realised Master, whom we call Sat Guru, knows what is the best way for a particular jiva. So He or She guides you either in the path of denial or in the path of divinisation.

If you have come to the point of either taking the path of

divinisation or of denial, then you are ready to start this process of sadhana. With some clarity, determination and understanding, of the goal you want to reach, of the process you have to go through and with proper guidance, you will successfully walk on this path. If you have not reached this state, then keep collecting merits through selfless service (charitable deeds) and try to make efforts to have the company of the wise. Do also remembrance of the Lord and keep gradually filling your bags with these things, so that they will accumulate and grow; and finally one day you will also feel this strong desire, either for God or for liberation.

We will go slowly and gradually, because this path of sadhana cannot be covered in a short time. So again tomorrow we will discuss the paths of divinisation, and of denial.

I am trying to delineate a practical way for each one of you to do something in this life according to your level. Because this human life is very precious, it is a great opportunity. And the greatest benefit of this human life is that we can do something for our highest welfare in this human body. Do all the other things, eating, sleeping and all that you are doing in the world, but find some time to do something for the welfare of this soul. This body and all of this body's connections will stay here and what will pass on is this soul. Usually people do everything for this body and nothing for the soul. May the Holy Mother shower Her blessings on you all so that you develop the desire to liberate yourself from the cycle of births and deaths.

Hari Om

Bhakti - The Path of Divinisation

I was telling you all that there are mainly two streams in sadhana or two means employed in order to reach that Ultimate goal. One is divinisation and the other is denial.

In the path of divinisation or devotion, God is considered as a God of Love, a God of form and personality. There is also a special attribute called grace which the Lord has. It is due to this grace and compassion for devotees, that the formless chooses to manifest in form.

Now, we are all bound to this world by strings of affection, love and attachments, which are emotional. It is as if we are trapped in these meshes of emotions, which we have woven through many lives of relationships. Desires come from attachment for things and beings of this world, and due to these desires we end up manifesting again and again in this realm of mortality, in human and other forms also. You'll see that our thoughts usually follow our heart. As long as we have emotional ties, as long as attachments are there, it is very difficult to pacify and bring the mind under control. The mind is usually distracted by attractions and attachments of this world. So one way is to fight, counter, eradicate these emotions and cut the strings of attachment. The

other way is to transform, taking these same emotions and directing them to another level. This transformation of human emotions and actions is what I call divinisation or making divine – making every emotion and action divine.

So in this second path, the path of transformation, or let us say divinisation, the very same emotions that bind one to the world and act as hindrance and obstacles in the path of Realisation are channelised, transformed and directed towards God. Thus one's emotions become aids in sadhana. The process that is followed in transforming these emotions is what we call bhakti or devotion. Instead of struggling to detach oneself from the world and denying it, instead of trying to break the strings of attachments, it is easier to cultivate an attachment or love for God and this attachment for God gradually destroys the worldly attachments. The School of Bhakti says you can develop a relationship with God. You are tied to this world, because of your many relationships - children, husband, so on and so forth. Now, take this aspect of relationship and direct it towards a personalised God. Through bhakti all forms of relationships are possible with the Lord. God can be a Lover, a Friend, a Master, a Mother, a Father and even a Child. The process of cultivating this relationship with God is what is called Bhakti Yoga or union through love and devotion.

How does one develop this love for God and this connection with God? The first step is shrabana or listening to the names and glorious exploits - called lilas - of the Lord, and the second is kirtana, singing or chanting the nama or names, and gunas or excellent qualities, of love, compassion, of mercy which

God has for His devotees. Not only singing but even dancing in joy. So what you are doing is you are not discarding your feelings or denying your senses. You are listening with your ears, using your mouth - the power of speech - and your hands and legs to develop this devotion towards God and simultaneously removing this attachment towards the world.

How does this work? Whatever material objects we think of in this world, we think of its name first. Name and form are interrelated and interconnected. For example, when you think of an apple, first comes the name “apple”. Then the form appears or vice versa. Our mind is full of these names of objects, places and people. As we are always listening about objects of this world and also speaking of mundane things, the world remains in our minds and also occupies our heart. Now, by chanting the name of God, what you are doing is like playing a tape. If you record something anew on top of something that has been already recorded, what has been recorded before gets wiped out. So by constantly listening to the name of God, it helps to wipe out the names of this world.

When you constantly listen to something and speak of those things, you naturally begin to think of them. We are always hearing, and speaking about the objects and creatures of this world, so we get connected with the world and trapped in it also. We take this world to be our only existence and reality. So the constant repetition of the name of the Lord helps to remove the world from the mind and to also replace it with something else. After constantly listening (shrabana) and chanting (kirtana), we come to the third stage, that is, remembrance (smarana). Then your

mind begins to dwell on this new aspect. The mind begins to dwell on the beautiful form and the soul-elevating exploits of your chosen God³ and your thoughts begin to move around this new centre. Thus the uncontrollable mind begins to get focused. So what you have done is that you have used your speech and employed your ears to direct your emotions and thoughts in a sublime direction, and in the process you have removed the world from your mind and established something new inside, on which the mind can be focussed.

We are also connected with this world not only due to our emotions but also due to our activities. We do things in this world for material gains, so we develop a material connection with this world. Holy Mother once gave a simple example. When a mother takes care of her child, she thinks of the child. Thinking of the child builds up a connection, a bond of affection and love for that child. Likewise, if you start working for God and directing your actions and service towards God, then you will naturally start thinking of God. If you start thinking of God, you will develop a connection with Him, and gradually love Him also. This service of a personal God is archana, or worship. The dynamics behind this is that by working for God, we connect our mind with God.

Thus, we are not denying activities, but we are only changing the centre towards which we direct it. We also change the purpose and motive behind our actions. These activities create

3 Here we have different incarnations and manifestations of God so a devotee chooses that form of God towards which he/she feels attraction and special inclination

a link with a higher aspect, and help to loosen our bonds with the world. So you do not have to go away from the world or renounce all activities; you just have to give it a new direction and develop a new attitude and purpose. While living in the world, you can do these things, shrabana, kirtana, smarana, and archana. If you do a little of this while staying in the world, you will gradually begin to develop a connection with God and begin to love Him, too. As more and more of this love for God develops, then less and less will be the attachment for this world.

There are three steps in this process of directing one's activities towards God. These are, service of God or doing our actions for God, called archana, bandana and padasevana. Archana is worship. Here in India we have a whole system for doing archana - you dress the Lord, put flowers, offer incense and light lamps. Bandana is chanting certain hymns or praising God - eulogising God, glorifying Him for His magnanimous qualities and entreating Him to shower His grace on us. Padasevana implies a few things. Pada means feet, so in one sense it means service done by one's feet, that is, circumambulating the altar of the temple or the temple itself, this is a common practice of devotion in India. Secondly, it means doing pilgrimage by feet. Pada is also the suffix attached to the names of Vaishnava archaryas or teachers, so it can also mean service of the Master or Guru.

Through these steps of devotional practice you develop a new attitude and also a relationship with God. At first it is the attitude of a servant towards the Master - called dasya - "Lord, you are the Master and I am your servant." Through this attitude you

transform the sense of ego, which is the biggest obstacle in your path of unity with God. You develop humility, what Ramakrishna calls the *dasya* ego or the servant ego. You cannot throw off the ego immediately, even in months and years; so what you do is through the practice of devotion, you transform it and surrender this ego and thin it out. When you become an obedient servant, your activities will be only as an instrument of God. You become a channel of God and thus you surrender your individuality and will to God.

As your love for God increases and your relationship with Him becomes stronger, there comes another step. From *dasya bhakti* you develop the relationship of *sakhya* or that of a companion. But it is not necessary that everyone develops *sakha bhava*, each *bhav* in itself is complete and when perfected can lead to union with God. The restrictions of being a *dasya-bhakta* is not there in *sakhya*, you are more intimate with Him and can play and joke with Him as a friend. Like the *Gopalas* of *Gokula* who sported with boy Krishna There is also the relationship of *batsalya* or to think of God as one's child and to have the attitude of a Father and Mother towards God like *Nanda* and *Yasoda*, who thought of Krishna as their child and treated 'Him' as such. In Christianity there is the *bhav* of thinking of oneself as God's children and God as one's father. Here in India one does not only think of God as Father but can also think of God as Mother. *Matru upasana* or worship of the Ultimate Reality as Mother is very developed in India. There is also *santa bhav*, which is the *bhav* of silent contemplation on God in which the Yogis merge.

The highest bhav is madhurjya, or the relationship of the lover and beloved, because it is the most intimate. All veils drop and one unites body, mind and soul with God - like the gopis of Vrindavan or Sri Radharani.

One other step in the nine forms of bhakti is – atmanibedana or complete surrender when the devotee prostrates to God with the attitude, “O Lord I am Yours and You are mine.” These are the steps one follows in this path of devotion. We have discussed this process of transformation. In this path, you do not immediately sacrifice the things you like, but you offer them to God. You do not reject them but you transform them. One goes towards the same destination of detaching the mind from attractions and desires for this world, which bind and do not allow the mind to be concentrated and focused. But one follows a completely different modus operandi - of not rejecting but surrendering, of not renouncing but offering or directing these attractions to God. There are very few who really have the power to deny. So this is a path that is suitable and much easier for most people.

For instance, think about the case of a householder. You cannot immediately tell him to reject and renounce this world and go away to the forests and sit in silent contemplation. Especially in today's age when we do not have the ability to renounce, and also there are no forests to go away to. You cannot go to the forests and survive by drinking the waters of the stream and eating the fruits of the trees. So this is the most suitable way for this age, the way of gradual transformation. Not changing the circumstances, not denying them but slowly divinising them. Making the very house

you live in into a temple.

In this path, there is not only effort but, as I said earlier, there is something called grace. The sadhak (aspirant or devotee) does not depend on his efforts only but on the grace of God, which comes to help and hold his hand in his progress towards that ultimate goal. One path is not suitable for everybody. One has the choice of different paths, each according to ones nature. This is a very special aspect of Sanatana Dharma. One treads on a certain path according to one's samskara. It is not that one is better than the other. It is just that one path is suitable for one according to his nature, according to his samskara and circumstances, and the other is suitable for another, according to the circumstances he is in and according to the ability he has acquired through his samskara. Both the path of divinisation and the path of denial are equally effective means of taking you to the goal. They can also be combined together because there is no hard and fast line between the disciplines of one path and that of the other. We'll come to the other path in our next discussion.

Hari Om.

A Brief Introduction to Gyana - The Path of Denial -

The jiva gradually gathers momentum to finally free itself from the cycle of transmigratory existence, the cycle of births and deaths and the play of duality into which it has fallen. Having fallen into the folds of maya, covered by the veils of avidya (ignorance), it has lost its true state of uninterrupted bliss, complete consciousness and absolute existence. Having identified itself with the body and its limiting adjuncts the soul, which is ever free and of the nature of Sat-Chid-Ananda (Pure Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), allows itself to be limited by identifying itself with the changes and the modifications of this body, such as birth, growth, decay, old age, death and suffering. This soul in conjunction with the body, having enjoyed and suffered the dualities of pleasure and pain and also the fragmented pleasures of sensations which it procures through the senses, reaches a state of saturation and sometimes that of deep frustration also. Then through disciplines and practices it develops the desire for liberation.

Through observances of yama and niyama (disciplines), it gathers the strength and the ability necessary to walk on this path of denial and renunciation. Since this path of denial, detachment and

renunciation is most difficult for the embodied being, it starts on this path with the practice of sama and dama. Dama is the restraint of the senses and the organs of action. Sama is the restraint of the mind or the equanimity of mind. I will give you an example of what self-restraint is. There is a tendency, or sometimes an impulse that arises in you to steal something that you like. But the control of this impulse due to whatever reason, maybe social or some other condition, is called self-restraint. What you have done is that you have used your intelligence, sense of discrimination and sense of what is good and bad or right and wrong to control the mind and prevent it from putting into action – through the organs of actions – the desire to steal.

The application of restraint on the senses – the organs of action and the organs of knowledge is dama. When you do not allow the eyes, ears and other organs of knowledge to come in contact with distracting objects and thus restrain the hands, legs and the other organs of actions from doing activities derogatory to one's spiritual upliftment it is termed dama.

Sama is a state of awareness and equanimity of mind which prevents distracting or negative thoughts and impulses from entering the mind and from disturbing and distracting it. The controlled mind also acts like a harness over the senses and organs of action. Dama and sama are both interrelated and complementary. The practice of both increases the power of mind and physical vitality most necessary for sadhana and higher inquiry.

Through the practice of physical and mental restraint, one preserves and develops the energy most necessary for the

development and the practice of the other qualities required in this path of knowledge. With every base desire that one prevents from being fulfilled, one gathers mental and vital energy which helps him in developing two important qualities ⁴titiksha and ⁵uparati most necessary for surmounting the trouble and hardships of this path. The energy preserved and developed through self-restraint also helps to awaken viveka - Purified Intelligence. Purified Intelligence gives rise to the power of vichara or discrimination.

A question may arise, “Do not people normally possess discrimination, as they are able to take so many decisions in their daily life?” True, people do have some sense of judgement, which they use in economic and other matters but they may be quite oblivious about the transitory nature of their lives and this world. So the discrimination one needs to develop is nitya-anitya-bastu-viveka, which means the intelligence that can discriminate between the Real and the unreal, between that which is Permanent and that which is perishable or transitory. When one has this kind of discrimination then there dawns in one the awareness of the unreal, the transitory and the painful nature of the world, of all worldly things, worldly creatures and worldly relationships. This awareness about the real nature of things produces what is called vairagya or dispassion. With vairagya the glowing colours with which desire has painted everything starts to fade and even the glamour of the

4 *Titiksha*: power of endurance – pain, insult and the dualities of heat and cold etc.

5 *Uparati*: self withdrawal; turning away of the mind from external objects or objects of sense enjoyment - to remain above them.

heaven worlds seems trivial.

Then the jiva begins to see this body not as a house of joy, but as a cage of imprisonment. He sees this world as a world of pain and suffering. The great Buddha once said if the tears of this world were collected, it would fill oceans. Unless pure intelligence has dawned in you, you cannot see the real nature of this world. You will neither see the impermanent nature of the world nor the painful nature of the world. Without viveka and vichara you cannot realise the bondage that this ever-free soul has fallen into, having identified and interacted through this human body. Vairagya is the great blessing which bestows desirelessness and detachment from the unreal and the impermanent non-self .

When this vairagya matures and becomes strong, there comes a strong desire to be liberated from this bondage of limited consciousness and existence. This strong desire for liberation is called mumukshata. Armed with the qualities of sama, dama, nitya-anitya-bastu-viveka, uparati, titiksha⁶, vairagya and mumukshata, the seeker proceeds with firewood on his head to the Realised Master who knows the Ultimate Reality. The seeker having realised his dire state, his true condition as a jiva, humbles himself and by long prostration, prays to the wise Master to impart to him the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth by which he will be liberated from this bondage of the body. He asks, “Oh Master, how is it that I have

6 Going with firewood to the Master is a Vedic tradition. The firewood is symbolic of the burden of karma or impurities that has been collected through the process of transmigration and which will be reduced to ashes in the fire of knowledge kindled by Guru.

entered into this bondage and how can I free myself? I, having fallen into this miserable state, pray. O great one, O wise Master, please save me by giving upadesha.”

Tad viddhi pranipaatena pariprasnena sevayaa upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah (Gita Chapter 4, verse 34). “By long prostration, by question and service, know that the wise who have realised this Truth will instruct you in Knowledge.” Lay yourself at the feet of the Master, completely submit yourself, admit your miserable state and express your helplessness. This is the attitude with which one approaches the Holy Master. In Sanskrit, pariprasnena means to question. What kind of question will the disciple ask the Master? Not “O Master, how can I be happy in this world?” nor “How will I have material success?”

A disciple or aspirant who has realised the true nature of this world would ask, “How have I fallen into bondage? How can I free myself from this bondage?” What would be the concern of one who is in a burning house? His only concern would be how to get out of it. So also, the aspirant who has realised this body to be a burning house - burning with the fire of desires and passions - prays to the Holy Master, “Please show me the way out of this house. Tell me Master, how I can get out of this bondage, out of this terrible condition which I am in?”

After prostrating and asking, the third step is seva. Seva means to serve. So the Holy Master says, “Child, don’t worry. Stay with me. I shall give you the means to get out of this world of duality. I shall show you the way of freeing yourself” and the

disciple stays with the Master and serves him. What is the greatest service we can do for the Master? It is obedience. Obey the instructions of the Master. Why obedience and service? Because through service and obedience, the impurities will be removed and the ego will be thinned out. By living with the Master and serving Him/Her, the aspirant will develop intense sraddha – love and respect towards the Guru, for His teachings and also for Liberation. Sraddha is another very important quality which is essential for attaining success on this path. Sraddha is actually necessary for attaining success in any field of human endeavour. Without this, the aspirant will not develop the ability to hold on to the truth or the knowledge that will be transmitted to him by the wise Master, since this knowledge is not only given by spoken teachings, but also transmitted directly to the disciple. The disciple has to be connected with the Master through his love, dedication and devotion.

After the necessary preparations and having become a proper receptacle one starts the process of acquiring and learning what we call Brahma Vidya, the Knowledge of Brahma, or the Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. This is the knowledge that will free one from the bondage of body, birth and death and from the necessity of phenomenal existence. The compassionate Master will impart the nature of Ultimate Reality to the disciple through the Mahavakyas, which are the supreme words of Truth, which the disciple will at first hear from the Master. This is called shrabana, listening to the Mahavakyas. The revered Masters will say, “My child, you are not this form. Neither are you these modifications of the body, nor are you a Brahmin, neither are you wealthy nor

poor. These are all qualifications of the body. But you are that indweller of the body, that indweller which is of the nature of Reality, which is all-inclusive and all-encompassing. This bondage is only a dream. Wake up from this sleep of ignorance. Realise that you are one with That, Tat Twam Asi, Thou art That. My child, now put these great words of wisdom into your head. I am Brahma. I am That Ultimate Reality. I am that ever free, the vast, without bondage, adjuncts and modifications, changeless and uncreated. Reflect and contemplate on these truths. Do manana, and nididhyasana.” Manana is reflecting on the words of the Master and Scriptures. Nididhyasana is constant contemplation on these truths. Through the pure intelligence which he has developed, by spiritual practices and disciplines in this life and in past lives, the disciple will gradually try to hold on to these truths, that “I am That”, “I am That unqualified Reality” and “I and That Ultimate Reality are One”.

First the truth will dawn in him, and then he will get more and more established in this truth through contemplation and meditation. Through constant meditation and contemplation, this identification with the body will slowly go, and he will awake from the sleep of ignorance and the dream of phenomenal existence. One after the other, the covers of ignorance will fall. Gradually he will realise his true nature - his oneness with the Ultimate Truth and get established in ‘That’. Finally, he will reach the end of his journey, which is Moksha.

I have delineated for you very briefly, this path of denial of the non-self and the realisation of the true Self. This is for those

souls who have already worked out much of their desires and karmas in their past lives. As I was telling you that day, in these advanced souls it is as if only the imprint of the desires are there, but the desires themselves have vanished, through practices of yoga, discipline and devotion in past lives. The process of denial is - *neti neti*, not this, not this. Neither am I senses, nor am I mind, intelligence, or ego. I am That, I am That, I am That. When the unreality is negated through *vichara* what remains is ‘Only’ Truth. *Kaivalya* is the knowledge of this ‘Only’ Truth.

As this is an exclusive path, we have to prepare ourselves through yoga, devotion, service and actions of charity, so that we develop that ability to deny this world and our lower self, and to rise to the status of exploring and finding the final Truth and uniting with It. That is why the *Bhagavad Gita* has said, “*kleso’dhikataras tesam avyaktasakta-cetasam avyakta hi gatih duhkham dehavadbhir avapyate*” (*Gita* Chapter 12, verse 5), which means “It is indeed difficult for the embodied being to attain the Unmanifested. The trouble is greater for those whose minds are set on It.” This path is what you call in Japan the path of Zen, which comes from the Chinese word, *chien*, and Sanskrit *gyan*. It is the path of reflection, meditation, contemplation and finally Realisation.

Hari Om.

Grace and Effort

Your stay here is gradually coming to an end. People travel and visit different lands for many different purposes. People also come to India for different reasons, but those who have made this journey to discover that other aspect of life are the ones who are really fortunate and who really reap the best benefits out of such a journey. You could have chosen to do other things, go to another place. You could have utilised your time and money for something else. But you have chosen to come here to the ashram. You have lived in holy company and heard the sacred chants. The sweet names of the Lord have entered into your ears. I am sure this has planted a seed inside your hearts.

We gather seeds through every action that we do. Through every experience we have in this world we are collecting seeds of actions and seeds of desires. But this is a very special seed that you have collected. This jiva is very fortunate when he/she has the opportunity of collecting this special seed. This seed is also a desire. But it is very different from all the other desires that you have collected through many, many lives. You are now here in this world reaping the fruits of those seeds which you have planted before in past lives. Christ has said, “You shall reap as you sow.”

But this seed is for a different kind of desire. This is the desire to bring an end to all desires; to know the higher aspect of life - the desire to contact God and to be liberated. Somehow I am sure that this desire to know this other aspect of life, to be better, to attain one's highest welfare, has been aroused in you, at least to some degree. Something has surely been transmitted to you.

I do not know how you are going to tend this seed you have collected here, and how you are going to protect it when you go back home. But if you do take care of it and protect it and provide the right conditions for it to sprout, one day it will grow and it will bear fruits. Every seed grows and finally bears fruits, and the fruits are of two kinds, of pleasure and of pain. These fruits of pleasure and pain are according to the seed of good or bad action, or positive and negative actions which you are collecting all the time through the process of life. But what are the fruits of this special seed that you have collected here going to bear? It will bear the fruits of either love for God, or a strong desire for liberation from transmigratory existence. Now, it is only a small seed of desire to become better. But this seed has the potentiality of a tree that will some day, in some life, maybe in this life, bear the fruits of either devotion and love for God, or for emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths.

I have told you that having come to the presence of the Mother, no one goes back empty. So what do you go back with after having come to this Holy presence? You go back with a seed, the special seed of desire to know God, to contact 'Him'. You have to provide this seed with water, air, and sunshine, so that it will

sprout - the water, air and sunshine of constant remembrance, of faith, of positive company and constant effort - because without effort, this seed will be there but it will lie dormant within the grounds. It will not sprout. But it will grow with some effort, with constant remembrance of your true nature or constant remembrance of God. And when the tree grows it will give you shade and fruits. Every being manifested in body has to suffer some pains, so it will give you shelter from the heat and the pain of this world. It will give you the fruits of bliss and joy in this life and when this body passes away also; because this tree does not bear the fruits of temporary joys, which we call pleasure, that have a beginning and an end. It bears the fruit of that joy, which is endless, which we enjoy here and hereafter, which we carry with us in our journey, on to our next lives or on to other higher planes of existence.

Today is probably going to be our last satsang. And my sincere wish for you all is that by Mother's grace and by your efforts, this seed will grow inside you and one day it will bear fruits. The two things you need are grace and effort. You have received some grace and I hope you will make the effort and aspire to hold onto this grace and to receive more of it, so that the boat of grace will carry you across this ocean of samsara - of phenomenal existence - the duality of pain and pleasure, of births and deaths, of meetings and partings.

Hari Om, Guru Narayana.

GLOSSARY

<i>archana</i>	worship
<i>atmanibedana</i>	complete surrender
<i>avidya</i>	ignorance
<i>bandana</i>	chanting hymns praising God
Batsalya	the attitude of devotion towards God as your child
<i>bhakti</i>	devotion
Brahma Vidya	the Knowledge of Brahma
Brahmic Consciousness	unity with our essential nature
Buddha state	unity with our essential nature
<i>dama</i>	restraint of the senses and the organs for actions
<i>dasya</i>	attitude of servant
<i>dasya bhakti</i>	servant devotion
<i>dasya ego</i>	servant ego
<i>dvesha</i>	dislikes
Ganges	A Sacred River of India
<i>guna</i>	qualities of nature
Guru	A Realised Master
<i>jiva</i>	individual soul or material being
Kaivalya	Liberation or the Knowledge of the 'Only' Truth
<i>karma</i>	action
<i>kirtana</i>	singing or chanting the names of the Lord
<i>lila</i>	glorious exploits of the Lord

GLOSSARY

<i>madhura</i>	sweetness
<i>madhurjya</i>	relationship with God as the lover and the beloved
Maha Maya	The Divine Mother, the Creatrix of the Worlds or the Manifesting Potency of the Lord
Mahavakya	the supreme words of Truth
<i>manana</i>	reflecting on the words of the Master and the Scriptures
<i>mantram</i>	a word given by the Master
Moksha	Liberation, unity with our essential nature
<i>mumukshata</i>	the strong desire for liberation
<i>nama</i>	name
<i>neti neti</i>	not this, not this, a means of negation of the unreal
<i>nididhyasana</i>	constant contemplation on the truths of the words of the Master and Scriptures
<i>nitya-anitya-bastu-viveka</i>	the intelligence that can discriminate between the Real and the Unreal, between that which is Permanent and perishable
<i>niyama</i>	discipline
<i>padasevana</i>	service done by one's feet or service of the Master.
<i>pariprasnena</i>	to question
<i>prakriti</i>	individual nature
Prakriti	Creative or Manifesting Force
<i>raga</i>	likes
Rajasic	passion,
Ramayana	Indian Epic. Accounts of Lord Ram
<i>sadhak</i>	spiritual aspirant
<i>sadhana</i>	the practice or way to free oneself from the limitations of the body and mind which will lead to Liberation
<i>sakhya</i>	companion

<i>sama</i>	restrain of the mind or the equanimity of the mind
<i>samsara</i>	A word used for the phenomenal world of change, transmigration of birth and death
<i>samskara</i>	the collective deposit of past actions, experiences and actions or conditioning
Sat Guru	The Realised Master
Sat-Chid-Ananda	Pure Existence-Knowledge-Bliss
<i>satsang</i>	the company of the wise, of the Realised, of the Holy
Sattwic	pure; selfless; Light
<i>shrabana</i>	listening to the names and glorious exploits of the Lord
<i>smarana</i>	remembrance
<i>sraddha</i>	strong interest or inclination for something
Tamasic	dark, selfish, body-bound or gross
Tat Twam Asi	Thou art That
<i>vairagya</i>	dispassion
Vaishnav archaryas	Vaishnav teachers
<i>vichara</i>	sense of proper analysis, judgement and discrimination
<i>vichara</i>	discrimination
<i>vikshep</i>	restlessness
<i>viveka</i>	Purified Intelligence
<i>yama</i>	discipline

- About the Author, Swami Ananda -

In the year 1971, Swami Ananda was guided by Divine Providence to a little hermitage on the sands of Puri, where lived his most venerable Master, the Holy Mother of Dibyadham. There he was guided by Her Divine grace in the path of Self-Realisation and instructed to help seekers of Truth from overseas. He has been doing so ever-since and to further fulfil his Master's instructions he has also travelled to the West. Since the Mahaprayana of Holy Mother, he has become the President of Dibyadham Yogashram and resides in Puri. He also spends some time at Tapovan, a hermitage in the forests about eighty kilometres from Puri, where spiritual retreats are held for the benefit of seekers.



Dibyadham Yogashram, Puri (Headquarters)



Dibyadham Tapovan Ashram, at Vill.Motori