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Disciplines to Divinize Every Moment

3rd July 1997

Yesterday I was mentioning about some of the disciplines that are necessary for taking up a life of spiritual seeking. Many of you are here now. You have come to the Ashram mainly for your spiritual seeking. You may be hailing from varied professional, cultural, economic and social backgrounds. All of you have in common the aspiration and love for spiritual life. You all are seekers. But one thing I have noticed in almost all seekers is that they lack the **awareness of being a seeker**. The emphasis that oneself is a seeker is not there.

One must have a very clear evaluation of what is meant by spiritual life and seeking. What is it that you are seeking? What is meant by spiritual pursuit? What are its merits and to where is it expected to lead you? All these thoughts and inquiries must engage your mind and intelligence to give you a proper evaluation and understanding of your pursuit.

In religion, the emphasis is on external God. But **in spirituality, the whole focus must shift from outside to inside**. You have to purify and integrate your body, mind and intelligence to realise that everything is God or Brahman. The fulfillment of your pursuit lies in that realization, in perceiving the One Presence and Reality in the apparently plural world. All the austerities undertaken have this as the primary goal. That is why we give so much of importance to disciplines – the disciplines to be undergone by the body, mind and intelligence.

Our personality is to be disciplined in two respects - in receiving as well as in expressing, in 'taking in' as well as in 'giving out'. Whatever you see with the eyes, hear with the ears, whatever you touch, smell, taste, eat or drink, is all a process of reception. In all this, one has to become sublime and disciplined. That is why we ask you to wear *sāttvika* dress, eat *sāttvika* food, hear good words. The discipline is to **be attentive and selective** about whatever inputs are received by your system from the external world. Similarly, in the matter of expressing yourself through words, thoughts, acts and interactions too, you have to become progressively more and more disciplined, sublime and spiritual.

In our after-dinner *satsang*, Ma often reads out anecdotes and illustrations from the biographies of Saints. I think, reading or listening to these revelations has great influence on your *sādhanā*. In the biographical accounts you will find spirituality personified. Through these revelations, the truths presented in the scriptural texts acquire real life significance and many of the intricacies of *sādhanā* become graspable in the light of Saintly behaviour. The scriptures do not tell us about how the seekers who read those texts went on pursuing the message in their life. So, this kind of session where we read or listen to the lives of Saints, can be very good inputs for the seekers. Regular reading and listening of this kind is a great discipline for a *sādhaka* who wants to purify himself.

Taking food is an essential and common activity for all. To discipline this intake, we first of all select the materials and the way of cooking in order to have a *sāttvika* influence on our body and mind. Moreover, to sublimate and divinize this intake, we chant the 15th chapter of *Bhagavadgītā* and some other *mantras* before taking food. By this discipline we tune our mind and body to receive only that which will be conducive to our spiritual growth. I always wonder why people use pickles. The cooking should be such that the natural flavour of the vegetables is preserved and the very sight of food should make the salivary glands secrete without the aid of pickles and other ingredients.

Now, the manner in which you express yourself, has also to be thoroughly spiritualized. Your words and actions – the way you speak, sit and get up, the way you walk and prostrate – indicate the mental make-up and purity. That is why we ask you to maintain cleanliness in all daily habits. I always say that your bathroom should be as clean as your *pūjā* room. Is God present only in the *pūjā* room?

The other day Ma and Naya Swamiji were discussing that we must make a small cloth (*kara-vastra*) which the Retreat participants may use for placing their books on during the *satsangs* or discourses. In many orthodox centres, they do not keep the books on bare ground. They always place them devotionally on a piece of cloth. We should imbibe such good practices to make our life as much spiritualized as possible.

The more you **spiritualize your behaviour** and you are attentive to disciplining every facet of your life and activities, the more sublimity you will feel. All of you practise *dhyāna*. What is this *dhyāna* for? Don't think that *dhyāna* is always for *samādhi* or Self-absorption. Absorption may be one aspect of it. What about the life before and after absorption? *Dhyāna* is an inward focussing of the mind to understand the defects and deficiencies of our system and thereby to bring about purity. When you sit closing your eyes, looking into the mind, you will come to know the thought pattern in you. You will understand your mind – discover its various hidden tendencies. The thoughts will come and stand before you like your own reflection in a mirror. If you do not like them, if they are not favourable, then the very discovery of their nature will begin the process of eliminating or sublimating them. But one has to be earnest and straightforward in this regard.

As you progress in your *sāadhanā*, the disciplines become more and more inward and subtle, until at last the mind becomes one with purity. When the ego is dissolved, when the *karṭṛ-bhokṭṛ-bhāva*

(doership and enjoyership) is lost, everything proceeding from the mind will become pure:

सुवर्णाज्जायमानस्य सुवर्णत्वं च शाश्वतम् ।

ब्रह्मणो जायमानस्य ब्रह्मत्वं च तथा भवेत् ॥

*suvarṇāj-jāyamānasya suvarṇatvaṃ ca śāśvatam ।
brahmaṇo jāyamānasya brahmatvaṃ ca tathā bhavet ॥*

(Aparokṣānubhūtiḥ - 51)

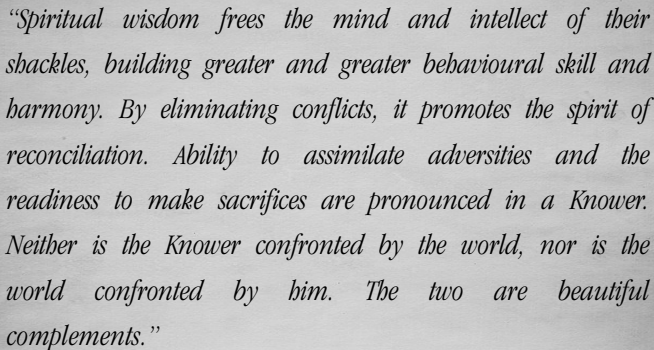
As anything made of gold has the nature of gold alone, so also anything proceeding from Brahman must be of the nature of Brahman alone.

The ultimate discipline of the Seer is to see everything as rooted in Brahman. His buddhi constantly dwells on the fundamental oneness underlying all plurality. How can anything non-spiritual come from him? When I talk to villagers, I cannot talk to them at my level. They come here for their purpose. Should I become inaccessible to them? Whatever be their purpose, it is for me to spiritualize the whole interaction. I will not do anything which is not spiritual. It is not possible for me.

Such wholesome spiritualization can be accomplished by living in the proximity of Saints or Guru. In *Gurusannidhi*, the whole atmosphere is spiritual. Whatever is done in the Ashram, is an extension of spirituality. Don't think that *Guruseva* means doing only some personal service to the Guru. Any work related to the Ashram is *Guruseva*, a service **primarily meant to purify the seeker**. It may be cleaning vessels, fixing stamps, going to the town for bringing the required items, or any other activity you are asked to do either by me or by Ma or Naya Swamiji. As you do the allotted work, think, "Am I doing it cheerfully? Is this being offered by me as a worship to my *Gurudev*?"

If you introspect in this manner, very soon you will find a fondness growing in your mind – a fondness and love for your Guru as well as the other Ashramites. That fondness will steadily make you more and more pure and sublime. Everything you do will become spiritual and sublime. Finally, the very idea that something is “non-spiritual” will drop off from the mind. That is the last and the **final discipline**.

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat



“Spiritual wisdom frees the mind and intellect of their shackles, building greater and greater behavioural skill and harmony. By eliminating conflicts, it promotes the spirit of reconciliation. Ability to assimilate adversities and the readiness to make sacrifices are pronounced in a Knower. Neither is the Knower confronted by the world, nor is the world confronted by him. The two are beautiful complements.”