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### 1.3 Divinizing Every Moment

[About three years in Kharagpur were spent in extensive as well as intensive study of scriptures, contemplation, chanting and sitting quietly. After coming to the Ashram, all these were replaced to a large extent by domestic work occupying most of my time. I was hardly able to associate spirituality with daily routine and felt starved of spirituality. Swamiji used to tell me repeatedly that it should not be so, although not to my whole hearted acceptance. One day he referred to the verse (Sreemad Bhaagavatam Sk 10, Ch 44, Verse 15):

या दोहनेऽवहनने मथनोपलेप-

प्रेङ्खेङ्खनाभरुदितोक्षणमार्जनादौ ।

गायन्ति चैनमनुरक्तधियोऽश्रुकण्ठञ्चो

धन्या व्रजस्त्रिय उरुक्रमचित्तयानाः ॥

*yā dōhanē'vahananē mathanōpalēpa-*

*prēṅkhēṅkhanārbha-ruditōkṣaṇa-mārjanādau ।*

*gāyanti cainam-anurakta-dhiyō'srukaṅṭhyō*

*dhanyā vrajastriya urukrama-cittayānāḥ ॥*

– Blessed were the Vraja women who were always fervently engaged in singing the praises of their beloved Lord of magnificent exploits, with their mind absorbed in Him through ardent love, no matter whether they were engaged in milking the cows, husking the cereals, churning curd, wiping the floor, sweeping the garden, cradling their children, consoling them or giving them bath, or doing any other household duties.

Slowly I found that the service to Swamiji – looking after his needs and doing Ashram work of all kinds – gave me inexpressible joy.

Looking after the Ashram affairs became service to the living Lord. Gradually, the expectation that I would revel in reading the scriptures, enjoy the bliss of meditation or even hear a few words from Swamiji – all were gone. Lack of expectation elevated the mind to higher levels of sublimity and stability.

When we had come for our second visit to the Ashram in December 1986, Swamiji wrote out some points of instructions for me (Published in Vicharasetu, March 1987, under the title “Be What You Are”). On my return to Kharagpur, I had been reading and re-reading them; the mind became quieter and quieter. So, after our stay in the Ashram for about two and a half years, one day I asked Swamiji: “Will you please write out for me again what you have to tell me now in particular?”

Somehow this did not materialize. As such, there was no necessity also, because throughout the day, whatever Swamiji spoke to me or to others was more than any instruction. Topics discussed and dealt with again and again, right from behaviour to *jñāna* or *jīvanmukti*, through repeated hearing and observation, got silently absorbed in my being. How slowly but naturally it takes place is a wonder! But that is what happens in the company of the Guru. Perhaps that is why *śāstras* give so much of importance to *Gurumukhāt śravaṇam* (hearing directly from the Guru).

But I still wanted Swamiji to write something for me, and when he was leaving for Delhi *Jñāna Yajñā* last October, I requested him to write a letter from there. Here is the letter Swamiji sent from Delhi. – Deepa. (Now Ma Gurupriya – ed.)]

2 November 1989

Dear and blessed Deepa,

*Hariḥ Om Tat Sat*. You wanted me to write something especially for you. I have been thinking of what to write. Nothing comes to mind specifically.

Religiously viewed, the whole world or universe including oneself is God. Philosophically put, the entire existence is a display, like dream, of the Supreme Reality, Brahman. Spiritually assessed, we are the One Self, even our body being Its creation.

If this be so, then what is the saadhana for, and what is its exact nature? We have rituals, *yajñas*, *pūjās*, prayers and yoga exercises. To them are added the day's interactions with the world. How do they co-exist and to what effect?

Actions originate from the inner realm. They subsist on that realm, and their outcome also falls there again. All the variety of actions and interactions apart, the causal and effectual realm is but one. Being so, what is to be done?

**That inner realm should be touched.** Only those means which succeed in touching this realm can mean saadhana. Actions subserve the mind. Mind grows on *bhāvas*. So, let the focus be on *bhāva*.

***Bhāva-śuddhiḥ* means the entire causal sublimation which naturally ensures the sublimity in the field of action also.** Action can be anything, *bhāva* will only be one. When fixity on that *bhāva* is achieved, the end is reached. So, in doing any action, in treating its place, importance and purpose, in assessing and designating its results, the *bhāva* is the chief factor. **You can do any act with a small and immediate dimension. You can do the same with a big and lasting dimension.** The elevation from the lower to the higher, expansion from the smaller to the larger, is what one should strive for.

The *bhāva*-elevation, *bhāva*-expansion, is then the quality to be gained. How? I think only by recognizing the need for it. The recognition, which itself is a mental process, verily brings the quality, depending upon the depth and persistence of the recognition. To cultivate depth and persistence, whatever inward exercises are desirable can be done.

So, the very nurturing of the concepts, thinking about them, loving them and finding delight in so doing – these are the actual processes which cultivate the quality. Then, reading and reciting relevant verses from scriptures, doing it delightfully and well, will mean growth of this

quality. Quality as such has no bearing upon the physical activity. But a person with a certain quality will sooner or later like to have activities harmonious with it.

Previously you used to complain that you were not able to associate spirituality with domestic chores in the Ashram and that you had to do so much of domestic work that you felt spiritually starved. So, the other day, when you told me that, “Now, even by this full-time domestic routines, I feel quite sublimated”, I felt very happy and relieved.

मनः-कृतं कृतं कर्म न तु देह-कृतं क्वचित्

*Manah-kṛtaṃ kṛtaṃ karma na tu deha-kṛtaṃ kvacit*

It is not **what** you do that matters, but **how** you do it – **with what attitude and aim**. What spiritual effect another seemingly spiritual activity will bring, the same will be equally had by the domestic pursuit also, provided you preserve the spiritual attitude and dedication about it. The domestic work in the Ashram is different from that in a household. The Swami has to live somewhere. He lives in the Ashram. The Ashram is like the body of the soul.

So, what should be the emphasis for you? Find out for yourself.

**Love the virtues.** The virtues will then haunt you, endear themselves to you. Then they will enliven you, and gradually settle in you. The virtue can be the wisdom you need, the ability you seek, the growth you look for or the expansion you cherish. Look for them fondly, as much as possible. They will enter and grace your system. Between seeking them and their gracing you, the time gap may be anything. That has no significance. Everything takes time; this also will. In patience, in sublime resolve, virtues and dedication grow best –

तत्स्वयं योग-संसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति

*Tat-svayaṃ yoga-samsiddhaḥ kālēnātmani vindati*

(Bhagavadgeeta - 4.38)

Love and *śivāśis*,

Swamiji

**PS:** Adding on to what I wrote yesterday –

Look for the 11th skandha (Sreemad Bhaagavatam), 20th Chapter, 35th Verse:

नैरपेक्ष्यं परं प्राहुर्निःश्रेयसमनल्पकम् ।  
तस्मान्निराशिषो भक्तिर्निरपेक्षस्य मे भवेत् ॥

*nairapēkṣyaṃ paraṃ prāhur-niḥśrēyasam-analpakam ।*  
*tasmān-nirāśiṣō bhaktir-nirapēkṣasya mē bhavēt ॥*

To have **no expectation**, to rise above them, to be free of the ordinary dependences for having any kind of enjoyment, is to be very lofty inwardly. That statement is not something ordinary or usual. It is indeed sublime, wholesome and transcendental. Measure its worth spiritually.

*Nairapekṣyam* is the highest mental state; it is *analpakam*, *niḥśrēyasam* – felicity of the highest level and fullest measure. To the *nirapekṣa*, to one who has attained this loftiness, supreme bhakti will dawn. Evaluate now, what is bhakti like, and who will have it and when.

The mind, as in a child, has its characteristic sublimity and felicity. It is closest to the Soul or is the Soul's radiance itself. As one grows, reflections of the object world make it fill with expectation. This in effect means contamination. Contaminated mind becomes unsublime and non-radiant. When the expectation-dross is removed, it goes back to its original sublimity and felicity.

It is briefly put, but the distance to be traversed back is considerable. The quality to be gained is invaluable. *Nairapekṣya*, *nirdvandvatva*, *nirguṇatva*, indifference, transcendence – all these are synonymous. Do they not mean something greatly lofty, pure and rare?

Swamiji