

REVELATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PATH

(English Version of Path Pradeep)



Manav Seva Sangh, Vrindavan

REVELATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Guidelines for Spiritual Progress
of
Aspirants for Divine Life



*English version of some
teachings of*
MANAV SEVA SANGH

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by

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FIRST PRAYER

*My Lord,
By Thine Nectarine (सुधामयी),
Almighty, purifying
and motiveless Grace,
Grant the strength of renunciation (of desires)
to those afflicted with sorrow,
and the strength of rendering
selfless service
to those who are happy,
So that they may be released
from the bondage of happiness and sorrow,
and become blessed by
Divine Love.*

**THE ELEVEN RULES
OF
MANAV SEVA SANGH**

1. Self Introspection, or seeing one's own faults in the light of inherent Vivek (faculty of Knowledge and Discrimination between Right and Wrong).
2. Resolve not to repeat any errors committed previously and pray with simple faith.
3. Think and reason about yourself but have faith in others. Meaning, doing justice to one's own self but loving and forgiving others.
4. Build your moral character by self control, selfless service, contemplation on God and search for Truth.
5. Do not regard the duty of others as your right and do not consider the generosity of others to be due to your virtues. Do not take advantage of the weakness of others.
6. Even when there is no family or community relationship with others, address them in the same manner and have the same goodwill towards them, as for members of one's own family. Let there be unity of love between persons doing different types of work.
7. Render physical service to those close to you to the best of your capability.
8. For the welfare of your body exercise moderation in diet and daily living and perform your daily tasks yourself.
9. Beautify your personality by physical work, control of mind, discriminating intellect, loving heart and egolessness.
10. Attach greater significance to objects rather than money, to persons rather than objects, to Vivek rather than persons, and above all to Truth.
11. Discard brooding over the past and the future. Make the future bright by proper use of the present.

Dedication

This book is humbly and respectfully
dedicated to

SWAMI SHARNANANDJI MAHARAJ,

whose teachings have initiated me and opened
my inner eyes to perceive the
Divine Light.

Dr. Tej Govind



SECOND PRAYER

*My Lord,
By Thine Nectarine (सुधामयी),
Almighty, purifying
and motiveless Grace,
Grant all mankind the power to act
in accordance with one's Vivek,
and to make proper use of one's strength.
And Oh Ocean of Compassion,
by Thine boundless Grace
Speedily destroy attachment and hatred.
Let the life of all be full of
Service, Renunciation and Love.*

PREFACE

This book presents an English version of several illuminating articles in Hindi by Divya Jyoti Ma Deokiji, the chief disciple of Swami Sharnanandji Maharaj. These articles were originally published in several issues of 'Jeewan Darshan', the monthly magazine of Manav Sewa Sangh and have now been compiled in the form of a book in Hindi entitled 'Path-Pradeep'. A compilation of these articles in free English has been attempted in this book for the benefit of spiritual aspirants of the English knowing world.

An attempt has been made in these articles to convey the philosophy of Manav Sewa Sangh which is based on the deep thought and divine experiences of Swami Sharnanandji, the founder saint of Manav Sewa Sangh. I have personally benefitted greatly by following some of the teachings of the Sangh and I have no doubt that these will be of considerable help to all the pilgrims on the path of spirituality. The goal of life and the paths of Selfless service, Renunciation and Love for God have been emphasised repeatedly as these constitute the basis for all spiritual practices. A separate chapter on the philosophy of Manav Sewa Sangh has been added to help the aspirants in understanding the main features of this philosophy.

The writer is painfully conscious of the shortcomings in English translation of philosophical and religious terms and the highly abstract thinking of Swamiji Maharaj. It is hoped that the generous readers will ignore the shortcomings in English compilation and benefit by taking note of the spiritual truths presented in this book and follow them in their daily life if they appeal to their head and heart.

A brief introduction of Swami Sharnanandji Maharaj has also been given in the hope that it may induce a sincere seeker of truth to know more about the life and teachings of this great saint of modern India which can be a source of great inspiration and encouragement for all spiritual aspirants.

Dr. Tej Govind

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF SWAMI SHARNANAND

A Great Saint of Modern India and The Founder of Manav Sewa Sangh

Swami Sharnanand, whose teachings are presented in the literature of Manav Seva Sangh and in the audio-cassettes of some of his speeches, was an unassuming and simple person. The loss of eyesight in childhood prompted him to seek happiness-unmixed-with-sorrow and he, therefore, left home in the quest for Truth. He formally renounced the world and donned the garb of a sadhu (ascetic) at the early age of 18 years and was given the name SWAMI SHARNANAND by his Guru.

He was an original thinker whose mind was nourished by personal enlightenment; though blind, he possessed the light of Divine knowledge. His ego was completely sublimated in the Supreme Being and he had thus become a perfect instrument of the indwelling Spirit. He experienced and realised the nature of suffering as well as the source of bliss—both of the individual and the society. Deep sympathy for the suffering humanity and the great eagerness to help it, surcharged him with a sense of mission which impelled him, like Lord Buddha, to move tirelessly from city to city and village to village, urging people to think deeply about the eternal verities of life. At the same time he asked them not to have blind faith in him or anyone else. *The source of enlightenment is within man himself.*

He was endowed with spiritual insight. This enabled him to communicate with the hearts of people. Though a Sanyasi himself, he used to meet the people as any ordinary man—more as a loving friend, accessible to all alike. He explained profound spiritual truths in simple language to all men because he believed that Truth is the heritage of all men alike. Distinctions of religion, race, sect or creed had no meaning for him. He also regarded everyone as eligible for spiritual realisation and as such

he made little distinction between the learned and the illiterate, the hermit and the householder or the poor and the rich.

Appealing to the common-sense of man he explained that everyone's aspiration and the real want in life is for happiness, peace, freedom and love. Indeed this is the birthright and the goal of Man. The central theme of the Saint's wisdom is that a life full of peace, love and happiness, is attainable by everyone individually, by having keen desire for it, and by the right use of the triple faculties of Action, Thought and Belief, which are inherent in each individual. The learning, wealth, social status, individual circumstances or health of an individual make no difference in the fulfilment of this basic aspiration. His approach is rational and universal in its appeal.

Swami Sharnanand had very little formal education but he dumbfounded erudite philosophers by his incisive logic. No matter what questions were posed to him, by howsoever learned, he was at no time baffled nor did they make him blink for a moment. He always had a simple answer ready.

This brief introduction of Swami Sharnanand has been given in the hope that it may induce a sincere seeker of truth to know more about the teachings of this great Saint which can be a source of great inspiration and encouragement for all pilgrims on the path of spirituality.

Inspired by the profound yet practical teachings of Swami Sharnanandji, a group of disciples decided to dedicate their life to Sadhana and service of the Sangh. Highly educated individuals, administrators, and thinkers were particularly attracted by Swamiji's loving personality and his teachings.

The first among them to enlist as a life-worker of the Sangh is Divya Jyoti Deokiji, who was at that time working as Professor of Psychology in Women's College, Ranchi (Bihar, India). Eversince Swamiji merged in the Supreme in 1974 she has been actively engaged in the propagation of teachings of the Saint which have captured the hearts and minds of thousands of people in India. The membership of the Sangh has been steadily increasing from year to year due to her wise and dedicated guidance and service of the Sangh.

SOME SALIENT FEATURES
OF
THE PHILOSOPHY OF
MANAV SEWA SANGH

The goal of life is Self-realisation or God-realisation and thus attaining one's real life which is useful not only for oneself but also for the world and its Creator as well. Immortality, Profound peace, Absolute independence and indescribable Bliss are the characteristic features of this real life of ours which exists eternally and is therefore present within us even now. The reason why we do not actually experience peace, independence and bliss in our present day-to-day life is that we have identified ourselves completely with our body and the world which are both subject to birth, change and death. The truth is that one's body and real self are quite different from each other. Body is mortal while the self is immortal and not subject to any mutation or death. The compulsion of birth and death, and the concomitant misery and suffering, ceases for ever in persons who conquer sorrow and death and achieve their real life by attaining Self-realisation or God-realisation.

Manav Sewa Sangh declares unequivocally that each and every spiritual aspirant can attain this goal of life quite independently, in the present itself, irrespective of one's circumstances or help from any individual or object in the world. This is so because everything which is required for the attainment of goal of life has already been given to each one of us since birth by the motiveless Grace of God. It is thus possible for every seeker of Truth to attain Self-realisation or

God-realisation irrespective of whether one is educated or uneducated, wealthy or poor and mighty or weak.

Every human being is endowed since birth with the power to do something, the power to think and discriminate between right and wrong (Vivek), and the power to have belief and faith in one whom one may not have seen or understood. In the light of inherent Vivek, one can not only think about oneself but also about the world and its Creator, and determine the goal of one's life as well as the means for attaining the same. By proper use of these triple God-given powers of Action, Thought and Belief, it is possible for every spiritual aspirant to attain the goal of life. The three fundamental paths for spiritual progress (Karam Yog, Gyan Yog and Bhakti Yog) are based on these three inherent faculties of man.

The proper use of power to do work is to help others selflessly to the best of one's ability. By doing this, one not only becomes useful to the society and the world but also becomes free from attachment to individuals and objects, and thus achieves purity of mind which constitutes the basis for attainment of goal of life.

In the light of Vivek the following facts of life become obvious :

1. One's body and self or 'I' are quite different from each other and the requirements of these two are also very different. While the body needs food, shelter and clothing etc., the Self aspires for Immortality, Peace, Independence, Truth and Love, and unless this aspiration is fulfilled one is not satisfied with fulfilment of bodily requirements alone.

2. Desires arise only when one considers oneself to be the body or regards the body as one's own. Renunciation of desires is essential and compulsory for all spiritual aspirants because one's basic aspiration for everlasting peace,

independence and bliss cannot be fulfilled unless worldly desires are renounced.

3. Everyone is one's own in one way or the other. All of us live on the same earth and share the same air, water and light etc., and we are all the children of one God alone. Acceptance of this fact will naturally mean that we will not harm anyone but will help each other as far as possible. This helps in establishment of an ideal society and preservation of world peace.

The proper use of inherent power of belief and faith is to have belief and faith in the existence and glories of God, and to regard Him alone as one's own, even though one can neither see nor understand Him. Initially, one accepts God and His glories and One's eternal relationship with Him alone, on the basis of faith in the words of one's Guru and the writing in sacred scriptures, as well as one's own need for an omnipotent and omniscient protector and guide who may stay with us always. Love for God is naturally awakened once we regard God alone as our own and surrender ourself to Him unconditionally. By Love we can see as well as understand God and become one with Him.

According to Manav Sewa Sangh the only endeavour of man is to do Satsang, because Satsang alone can solve all the problems of human life. The meaning of Satsang is to sincerely accept the truths of life and to give up association with what one knows to be A-Sat (Not true or non-eternal). Some of the fundamental truths of life have already been mentioned earlier. By accepting these truths, Sadhna (Spiritual practices) commences naturally and spontaneously from within, without our having to do it voluntarily, and thus doing is converted into happening automatically. Sadhna leads to attainment of goal of life. Two examples may be quoted to illustrate this important truth. If one accepts the truth that Almighty God alone is one's own, then love for God is automatically kindled in one's heart and one naturally

becomes free from all fears, worries and cares without doing anything else for it. Similarly, if we accept the truth that nothing in the world is personally one's own, we automatically lose all fear and acquire non-attachment to both objects and individuals. Fearlessness and Non-attachment are important Sadhnas for Self-realisation and attainment of goal of one's life. This great emphasis on Satsang or accepting truths of life and discarding association with known untruth, is one of the special features of the teachings of Manav Sewa Sangh.

Another very important truth emphasised by Manav Sewa Sangh is that goal of life is attained by "Vishram" or physical and mental effortlessness, rather than by spiritual practices requiring physical effort or practice. This is so because Truth or God resides within our own self all the time. The only reason why we do not actually experience the existence of God or Truth and our real life within us is, that we have completely identified ourselves with our three bodies because of which all our desires, thoughts and activities are centred around fulfilment of bodily requirements alone. Awareness of the Truth or Reality within, occurs only when we disassociate ourself from our three bodies. By closing the eyes and not doing anything physically one gets detached from the gross physical body and the visible world. Similarly, by not thinking about anything, one's association with the subtle body and subtle world is detached and one experiences the peaceful state of existence in the causal body. With further deepening of peace in this state, the association with the causal body is also detached and one then experiences the bliss of existence of one's real body-less self which is immortal and divine. This is attainment of one's real life or Self-realisation and God-realisation.

It is for this reason that Manav Sewa Sangh attaches great significance to doing 'Mook Satsang' or becoming physically and mentally effortless for short periods initially

and for longer periods later on. During these periods of physical and mental effortlessness one acquires the necessary strength to detach oneself from the physical bodies. Knowledge of Truth and kindling of Love for God also occur automatically during this period. This spiritual practice is, therefore, of immense help for all spiritual aspirants.

Doing of Self-Introspection has also been assigned a very important place in the spiritual practices recommended by Manav Sewa Sangh. During this process of introspection or looking within, one becomes aware of impurities like attachment, greed, desires and pride etc., that may be existing in one's personality. By firmly resolving to discard these impurities and invoking God's help for this, one can become faultless which is the first pre-requisite for all spiritual progress. The simplest and easiest way to get rid of all mental impurities is to resolve not to do what one knows to be wrong and not to repeat a wrong done already. Devotion to duty, knowledge of Truth, Love for God and other divine attributes manifest automatically in a pure, "Aham". Therefore, the first step for advancing on the path of spirituality is to make oneself faultless or free from all mental impurities.

Another very important truth emphasised by Manav Sewa Sangh is that keen aspiration for attaining the goal of life and full faith in the actual existence of the real life which one aspires to achieve, is the best means for attainment of the goal of life. This is so because keen aspiration for Self-Realisation or God-Realisation naturally devours the fleeting desires for worldly objects and when only this aspiration remains in life it is fulfilled automatically. It is, therefore, very important to have one-pointed devotion to the ideal of achieving one's goal. When only one aspiration remains, the whole of life-force of the individual proceeds swiftly towards its real source and becomes one with it.

The Sangh attaches great importance to attaining Egolessness because the curtain of ego or self-pride is a great

obstacle in the merger of one's limited self with the Infinite self or God. Desirelessness, Non-attachment, and Surrender to God are the principal means for attaining egolessness. Self-surrender is the quintessence of love and devotion to God based on the whole-hearted acceptance of the truth that God alone is eternally one's own. Self-surrender is the key to God-Realisation as well as the trump-card of the devotee for becoming one with the Cosmic beloved.

Rendering of selfless service, Renunciation of attachments as well as desires, and motiveless Love for God with unconditional surrender to Him, are the three main bases for spiritual practices recommended by the Manav Sewa Sangh.



SOME FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF LIFE

Truths of life are those which are true according to our Vivek (Light of Knowledge and Discrimination), or are capable of being proved on the basis of faith in God. These truths are based on the three fundamental systems of human philosophy which constitute the basis for the three well-recognised paths for spiritual progress— the path of selfless service (Karam Yog), path of knowledge and discrimination (Gyan Yog) and the path of faith and devotion to God (Bhakti Yog). It is important to accept the truths of life because, without this, one cannot get either lasting peace or real freedom or devotion to God. Personal salvation, building of an ideal society and preservation of world peace will also not be possible unless these truths are accepted and followed in one's daily life. Some of these fundamental truths of life are as follows :

1. "I am not the body, the body is not mine and it is not for my personal use either". This is the most important and the most fundamental truth of life which one must clearly understand and follow in life because without this one cannot advance even one step on the path of spirituality. The following arguments may be cited to substantiate this truth :
 - (a) "I" or my real self exists even when one's three physical bodies are discarded. One remains aware of one's own existence after death. Even while living, one can become aware of one's independent blissful existence by detaching one-self from one's corporal, astral and causal bodies during the peaceful state of "Mook Satsang" or meditation. This body-less

existence is our real life in which there is only profound peace, complete freedom and immense bliss. Such a life exists within us even now, but we do not actually experience it, because we have identified our self completely with our bodies. The fact is that only the physical body is discarded at the time of death; the soul encased in astral and causal bodies survives after death. Ultimately, the two subtle bodies are also destroyed and then 'I' alone remains which is immortal.

- (b) The physical bodies are made of earthly elements which are mortal while 'I' am divine and immortal. The glories of God are present in a latent form in my self and the goal of life is to manifest the divinity already present within us.

The fact that the body is not mine is proved by the fact that I have no independent control over it. I cannot keep the body for as long as I like nor prevent the onslaught of diseases or avert the death of body. So the body is not mine; it has only been gifted to me by the motiveless grace of God.. One can regard anything as one's own only if one had independent control over it.

One could utilise one's body for obtaining objects or for enjoying bodily pleasures, but by doing so one loses one's independence and becomes a slave of the body and the world. Moreover, indulgence in pleasure not only makes one weak and prone to diseases but also obliges one to experience sorrow, worries and fears. This no one likes. So the best course is to utilise the body for service of others and not for personal pleasures. By doing this we become free from attachment to the body and the world and

our mind becomes pure which constitutes the basis for attainment of goal of life.

2. Another basic truth is that nothing in the world is personally one's own. Objects like body and money etc. have been given for proper use only; not for regarding them as one's own. It has been proved already that even one's body is not one's own because one has no independent control over it. Similarly, one has no independent control over any object or individual in the world and so nothing in the world can be regarded as personally one's own. By accepting this truth one loses all fear of death of body or loss of objects and becomes free from greed and attachment to the body or individuals. Impurities of the mind like greed, attachment, anger and pride etc. are thus cleansed and one attains eternal life of profound peace, independence and bliss. Unless one accepts this truth of life one can neither render selfless service nor get liberated from the bondage of world or become a devotee of God.
3. Another very fundamental truth of life is that no one can attain independence, peace of mind and freedom from worries, sorrows and fears unless one renounces desires for getting anything whatsoever from the world or even from God. Desires arise only when one considers oneself to be the body and regards the body as one's own. Therefore, it becomes easy to renounce desires if one accepts the truth that one is not the body and the body is not one's own.

Renunciation of desires of all types is absolutely essential in view of the following considerations also :

- (i) The whole world combined cannot fulfil the basic aspiration of even one individual for securing everlasting peace, happiness, independence and

immortality. Therefore, it is futile to hope for fulfilment of one's basic want with the help of world. The world can only fulfil the requirements of one's body and these are fulfilled not by desiring but by rendering selfless service to the world.

- (ii) It is a fact of life that all the desires of anyone are never fulfilled while some desires of everyone are fulfilled. Fulfilment of desire makes one happy for some time while non-fulfilment of desires makes one unhappy. Since all the desires are never fulfilled, the end result of retaining desires is unhappiness alone, which no one likes. Moreover, by becoming desireless, one's essential desires are fulfilled by nature while non-essential desires do not arise and thus one secures lasting happiness.
- (iii) By becoming desireless one's mind becomes pure and one gets everlasting peace, independence and liberation from the bondage of the body and the world. It is because of desires alone that one is deprived of one's birthright of attaining lasting and profound peace, absolute independence and immense bliss of divine love. Renunciation of desires is, therefore, essential and compulsory for all seekers of truth, independence and bliss.

- 4. Another important truth of life is that everyone is one's own in one way or the other. All of us live on the same earth and share the same air, water and light etc. The self or Atma of everyone is also the same and we are all the children of one God alone. Therefore, one should not only not harm anyone in any way, but also help each other and have good-will for everyone. This helps in the around spiritual progress of an individual and also

helps in establishment of an ideal society and preservation of world peace.

5. A most important and very fundamental truth of life is belief and faith in the existence and glories of God who is the Creator as well as the basis and the illuminator of the entire universe. God is Almighty and He alone exists eternally. He alone is our own and we are eternally related to Him only, and no one else. Initially one accepts God and His glories on the basis of faith in the writings of sacred scriptures and word of one's guru as well as one's need for an all-powerful and all-wise protector, guide and constant companion. But later on God becomes fully manifest and known to the devotees.

Love for God is naturally awakened once we accept God alone as our own and surrender ourselves to Him unconditionally. Love ultimately leads to union with the cosmic beloved and then nothing else remains to be attained.

The path of faith and devotion to God is an independent path for alround spiritual progress and attainment of goal of life which is achievement of everlasting profound peace, absolute independence and infinite bliss of divine love.



Essential desires are fulfilled by law of nature while renunciation of desires is done on the basis of Vivek (faculty of thinking and reasoning). All are endowed with Vivek by the motiveless Grace of God. Renunciation of desires, knowledge of Truth and awakening of Love occur spontaneously by proper use of one's Vivek.

Sant Vani

THE GLORY & GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE

Human birth is very precious because it is in this life alone that one gets an opportunity to do the necessary sadhna not only for permanent release from bondage of repeated births and deaths but also for attaining everlasting ineffable bliss of self-realisation. Such a valuable life we get by God's grace alone because good actions can be performed only after and not before one gets the gift of human life. The great glory and goal of human life is not only to achieve personal salvation and become useful for mankind and the world but also to please God by offering Him homage and selfless love of our heart which is greatly cherished by our Creator. That this is indeed the wonderful plan of God for man is proved by the fact that He has endowed each human being, since birth, with triple faculties of ability to do work, to think and discriminate and the power to love and have faith and belief in the unseen God. The duty of man is to fully develop these latent powers and by their proper use manifest the divinity and glory of God on earth.

The inherent power or ability to do work could be utilised either for securing personal pleasures and comfort or for rendering service to fellow beings. But if one works for personal pleasures, one not only becomes weak and prone to diseases but also becomes dependent on others for personal happiness and this no one likes. So the only proper use of our ability to do work is to render bodily service and help to those close to us and to wish for the welfare of the whole world. By doing this we not only become useful for the society and the world but also benefit ourselves greatly by getting rid of our attachment for work. Moreover, the philosophical truth is that each object and individual in the world is merely a

manifestation of the unmanifest Divine. Therefore, selfless service of persons with the sole object of pleasing God is actually worship of God which increases our love for God and ultimately enables us to achieve union with the Divine.

It is believed that in the entire creation, comprising more than 84 lac types of living beings, only man has been endowed with the faculty of Vivek or the power of knowledge and discrimination by which one can decide what is right and what is wrong, what is real or permanent and what is unreal or fleeting. This faculty also enables man to think about one's own self, the world and its creator and to determine the goal of one's life and one's duty towards self, the world and God or by whichever name we choose to designate the Creator or the Reality. Indeed, it is because of possession of this faculty of rational thinking and discrimination that man is different from the entire subhuman creation. In the light of Vivek one can clearly see that everything in this universe, including our own body, is changing continuously from moment to moment and cannot, therefore, be said to have any independent existence. It is also logical to conclude that behind this everchanging universe of names and forms there must be some Reality which is not subject to change or mutation. That from which the universe originates, in which it has its being and in which it ultimately dissolves is Reality or God.

A little reflection on the nature of self also makes it obvious that 'I' and my body are two different things. The body is subject to change and death while 'I' am essentially Divine and immortal. The saying that "Dust thou art and to dust returnest" refers only to our body and not to our soul or spirit or the inner reality of man which is not earthly but divine. Seeing the continuous change in each and every object of the world it is natural for man to conclude that the world cannot fulfil one's aspiration for everlasting peace and bliss. As such, the world and its objects lose their attraction and importance for the seekers of Truth who, therefore, discard

their faith in the world and its support for achieving personal salvation. By doing this, one gets free from the bondage and dependence of the body and world while still living in the world. Such persons lead a liberated life of freedom and bliss, and compulsion of rebirth ceases forever for them.

In addition to the faculty of work and thought each person is also endowed since birth with the faculty of belief, faith and love which constitutes a very important and very essential part of one's personality. All of us have belief and faith in someone or something. One may have faith in one's bank account or one's relations or health and status etc., or one may pin one's faith and belief in God whom one can neither see nor understand. It is everyone's experience that belief and faith in money, relations and one's health or status etc. can be shattered any moment and as such, no one having faith in these can ever hope to be free from fears and worries. It is also not rational to have belief and faith in something which is continuously changing and does not have any independent existence of its own.

Thus, the only proper use of the faculty of faith and belief is to have an unshakable faith and belief in God and His glory on the basis of advice of one's Guru and faith in what is stated in this connection in our holy scriptures. Our own need for a dependable, stable, powerful and loving companion, who can stay with us always and can fulfil all our needs, also urges us from within to regard the unseen and unknown God as our own because God alone can fulfil these requirements. Scriptures and saints assure us that initially the existence and glory of God has to be accepted on the basis of faith only, but later on the unseen and unknown God becomes fully manifest and one can even know Him by becoming one with Him.

The path of faith and devotion is an independent path for God Realisation. But faith in God becomes firm and live only when one gives up all desires and regards God alone as one's own, merging relationship with all others into faith, love

and relationship with God alone. Love naturally develops towards an object which one regards as one's own. Anyone who desires anything except God or who has faith in anyone other than God cannot become a devotee. The only desire and aspiration of a devotee is to offer the love of one's heart to God. The devotee who unconditionally surrenders oneself, along with all one's belongings, to God and desires nothing in return for it becomes exceedingly dear to God. The love which the devotee offers to God is very limited but when that love unites with the infinite ocean of love in God it becomes enormous and on returning to the devotee it completely overwhelms him; sublimating the ego and even the physical body of the devotee into the element of love itself. The life of such a blessed devotee becomes a blessing for mankind also as it becomes a medium for kindling the love of God in the hearts of all those who come even in the proximity of such a devotee. That we can all attain such a blessed state in the present life itself is a very reassuring and encouraging message of Manav Sewa Sangh for all mankind.

In summary it may be stated that the great glory and goal of human life is not only to achieve personal salvation in the present life itself but also to become a blessing for mankind by conferring solace, peace and divine love in the hearts of all those who come to them burdened with their fears, sorrows and anxieties of the life in the world. Even God eagerly cherishes exchange of love with such a blessed devotee !



THE ART OF LIVING

The art of living is to live in such a way that the goal of one's life is achieved. So the first step in this direction is to determine the goal of one's life because unless we know what we want we cannot get the same.

Many people believe that the only goal of life is to fulfil their own and their family's multifarious desires for maintenance of body in comfort and securing social recognition. The greater part of the time and energy of such persons is thus spent in catering to the physical and psychological needs of the body. But we know from personal experience, that all of our desires are never fulfilled and that fulfilment of one desire is soon followed by cropping up of other desires and, therefore, some desires always remain unfulfilled ultimately. Because of this one experiences sorrow, lack and helplessness as one has to depend on others for fulfilment of many desires. Indulgence in pleasure also leads to weakness and disease. Thus, attempts to fulfil desires only result in short spells of happiness followed by longer periods of unhappiness, worries, fears, loss of independence and weakness, which is the unfortunate lot of many of us in our daily life.

Another important fact is that mere maintenance of body in comfort does not satisfy an individual. This is so because our personality has a physical components as well as a spiritual component and the requirement of these two are quite different. The gross and the subtle bodies constitute the physical component of our personality and their need is for food, water, clothing, shelter and social recognition etc. By contrast, the hunger and thirst of the spiritual part of our personality is for immortality, peace, truth, freedom and bliss

of divine love. Our constitution is such that even when all the bodily requirements are fully provided we do not feel satisfied unless our craving for Immortality, Truth and Love is also fulfilled.

In view of the above considerations one should change one's outlook on life and decide once for all that the glory and goal of life is not merely fulfilment of one's bodily needs but also realisation of Truth and Divine Love for self along with usefulness for world and its Creator. Eternal peace, independence, fearlessness and bliss are the natural consequences of the realisation of goal of one's life. That this is indeed the goal of life, is proved by the fact that, without even our asking for it, God has endowed us all since birth with the power of doing work, the power to think and discriminate between right and wrong and the power of belief and faith. By proper use of these powers everyone can attain the glorious goal of life in all circumstances without any external help whatsoever. However, it is essential that one must have full faith in the achievement of goal of life in the present life itself because otherwise one's efforts for its attainment are bound to become weak and non-productive.

The proper use of the power to do work is to selflessly serve the world to the best of one's ability. Bodily help can be rendered only to those close to us but one can have good will for everyone in the world, and this by itself, becomes service of the world. Selfless service is conducive to development of love for the world and its Creator.

The proper use of power of thought and discrimination is to realise that one is not the body, and the body as well as none of the worldly objects, can be regarded as one's own because one has no independent control over them. Further, seeing the relentless process of birth, continuous change and dissolution in each and every individual and object of the

world, one can easily conclude that the world cannot fulfil one's real need for eternal life, peace and bliss. As such, it is rational as well as natural to give up desires for all worldly objects and to renounce the craving for the fleeting pleasures that the world can give. No one can become free from worries and fears unless one gives up attachment and desires for worldly objects as well as the transient pleasures that the world can afford. Knowledge of Truth, everlasting peace, fearlessness, freedom, Love and bliss are the natural consequences of discarding desires and craving for pleasure.

The proper use of power of faith and belief is to have unflinching faith in the existence of God and His glories and to regard Him alone as one's own on the basis of faith in the words of one's Guru, writing in holy scriptures and one's own keen aspiration for a very powerful, very loving and ever-present companion who may guide and protect us. It is a fact of life that one develops love for any object or person whom one considers to be one's own. Love of God is thus naturally kindled in the heart of a devotee who regards God alone as one's own and surrenders to Him unconditionally.

Vishram (effortlessness or True repose) naturally follows correct performance of one's duty, surrender to God and attainment of knowledge of Truth. During this state of effortless peace one acquires the strength to detach oneself mentally from one's physical bodies and actually realise one's blissful independent existence quite apart from one's bodies. In the peaceful state of detachment from physical body, one's life-force automatically moves towards its source and merges with it (Nitya Yog) and one becomes aware of Truth about self, God and the world (self-Realisation or Tatv-Bodh). When the intense darkness of ignorance (Agyan) vanishes for ever due to dawn of Truth the limited and circumscribed self merges in the Infinite self and then bliss and bliss alone

remains and thus the Sadhak becomes personification of bliss. Similarly, the limited ego of a God-surrendered devotee and the ego of one engrossed in selfless service of the world also ultimately becomes sublimated into Love alone. When Raman Maharishi attained the Truth, he remained immersed in bliss for months together, Lord Buddha roamed in forests for months in a state of Divine ecstasy on attaining knowledge of Truth. In the bliss of self-Realisation Swami Ram Tirtha declared that "Ram is in me and I am in Ram". These words of his are still resounding in the lives of people and will continue to do so for ages. Life full of knowledge and bliss is the real and everlasting life of an individual. This alone is life and Manav Sewa Sangh declares unequivocally that each one of us can attain such a life quite independently without any outside help whatsoever.

The art of achieving this goal of life is to give due importance both to selfless performance of one's duty and to attaining Vishram. Therefore, one's daily life should be such that when there is work to do for the welfare of one's body, family or the society, one should do it selflessly to the best of one's ability. After the work is over one should try to become effortless by doing nothing physically or mentally, for a few minutes initially and for gradually increasing periods later. This should be done at least twice daily, once soon after getting up in the morning and again before retiring to bed at night. The ideal, of course, is to become effortless for short periods before and after performance of each essential work. It has been stated previously that during this peaceful state of physical and mental effortlessness our physical and mental batteries are recharged and we thus acquire the necessary strength to detach ourselves from the physical body and thus experience the bliss of our body-less self. Dawning of knowledge of Truth and kindling of love for God also occur

automatically when the state of peace deepens. This spiritual practice is of great value for all spiritual aspirants, irrespective of whether they choose the path of search for Truth or the path of devotion to the Cosmic beloved for their spiritual progress. Alternating periods of selfless work and effortless rest are like our two legs for taking us to the door of God, Reality, or by whatever name we choose to designate the Truth.



Realise in the light of inherent Vivek that there can be no creation without a Creator and no perception without an Illuminator. The one who is the basis of creation as well as its Illuminator, belongs to all, and is within everyone even now. It is essential for spiritual aspirants to have unwavering faith and belief in God alone, because it is only by faith that one can get God.

Relationship is established with one in whom one has faith and relationship leads to remembrance which spontaneously awakens love. Accepting this fact, the Spiritual aspirants should constantly strive to attain perfection in their spiritual practices. Success is certain.

Sant Vani

INFLUENCE OF SORROW

Happiness and sorrow exist everywhere in the world and so no living being is exempt from them. But no one likes sorrow of self or others, whether it is big or small and concerns the body or the mind. Even then sorrow comes, unasked, in one form or the other, in the lives of all. For centuries several notions have been prevalent in human society in connection with sorrow. Let us consider whether sorrow, which is a compulsory element of life and from which no one has been able to escape till now, is really bad and to be feared and decried, or is it the result of our bad actions or punishment or some error of God ? From ordinary point of view all the above things appear to be correct, but one has to think that if sorrow is really bad why does it come at all in life. What then to say about sorrow?

The founder of Manav Sewa Sangh has thrown unique light on the important element of sorrow. From the beginning of history of mankind many things have been said about the nature of sorrow, its causes and how to remove it, but Manav Sewa Sangh has presented sorrow as a useful and compulsory fact of life. In its presentation of sorrow the approach of Sangh is incomparable. It regards sorrow to be a dispensation of benevolent law of nature and not the result of one's bad actions.

It seems strange to regard sorrow as a divine gift when it actually appears to be a curse of life, but it is true all the same. The Saint whose life experience constitutes the basis of thinking of this Sangh has called the beneficial aspect of sorrow as the influence of sorrow. To understand this point of view let us consider the nature of sorrow and its influence. Non-fulfilment of desire is sorrow. Experiencing grief and becoming nervous because of it means suffering from sorrow

while becoming alert and searching for the cause of sorrow means influence of sorrow. This is the whole secret. Sorrow itself is neither praiseworthy nor bad. The only question is whether one suffers from sorrow or becomes alert due to influence of sorrow. If one suffers from sorrow then sorrow is an abiding curse while influence of sorrow is a blessing which confers a life free from sorrow.

What is sorrow ? There is perpetual chain of birth and death in all that one can see. From this point of view sorrow is a compulsory element in the nature of the world. When a person gets attached to any object even after knowing this fact of nature, then the dissolution of that object appears painful to the individual. Thus, sorrow is the result of one's own ignorance.

The pride of one's ego begins to melt, and heart becomes tender, when one finds oneself unable to avert or remove sorrow and one then becomes conscious of the need for the permanent elimination of all sorrow. It also ends the delusion of getting happiness from objects, individuals and circumstances. During these moments, the truth of life begins to dawn and the voice of truth gets deeply stamped in the individual. As a result of this there is rapid progress towards attainment of sorrow-free and peaceful life. This is the gift of sorrow.

Truth is one. The same unseen, unknown and unmanifest Truth manifests itself in the form of the vast visible universe. That one Divine, conscious and blissful reality is well-wisher of all living beings and therefore, all the circumstances created by the benevolent laws of the supreme well-wisher are by nature good for everyone. When the individual in happy circumstances does not advance towards a life beyond all circumstances by generous and friendly behaviour while remaining unattached to personal enjoyment of pleasure, then the one who alone is our own, our supreme well-wisher and supreme friend, assumes the form of

unhappy circumstances. Sorrow makes the individual alert and by renouncing the desire for happiness, one attains a life free from sorrow. Similarly, sorrow induces one to pray to God, the remover of all sorrows and by His Grace, one is released from sorrow for ever. By recognising one's own God alone in the form of sorrow it becomes clear that the unhappy situation is nothing but a tool for one's Sadhna. Without sorrow it is not possible to get such a clear knowledge of the reality of life.

The saint who clearly saw the benevolent laws of the supremely well-wishing Creator of the world, has said that when a happy individual does not generously render service then unhappy circumstances are created by law of nature for one's spiritual progress. If by mistake one does not renounce (desires) in unhappy circumstances, or does not take support of God who is the remover of all sorrows and does not care in any way to advance towards attainment of eternal life, then by law one becomes bound to experience happiness and sorrow alone. By contrast, if an individual does not suffer from sorrow, does not eagerly strive to regain the lost happiness and resolves to renounce desire while still in the unhappy state, then one is released from all kinds of sorrow for ever and attains supreme bliss. From this point of view sorrow is a blessing as it is helpful in attainment of Supreme bliss.

Therefore, Manav Sewa Sangh has advised mankind that no one should feel nervous or afraid of sorrow, nor should one suffer from sorrow by regarding oneself to be unfortunate. But realising the significance of sorrow one should own the influence of sorrow and thus achieve a sorrow-free life of bliss for ever. In this connection the following sayings of the Sangh are very helpful.

1. To escape sorrow it is essential to give up craving for happiness while one is in the happy state. One who is not a slave of happiness does not experience sorrow.

2. It is a great Sadhan (Spiritual practice) to experience compassion at the sorrow of everyone else. One who regards the sorrow of others as one's own and whose heart is full of compassion, does not suffer from personal sorrow. The sorrow of one engaged in selfless service is shared by the whole society and he, therefore, dwells in uninterrupted peace.
3. Own the influence of sorrow when sorrow comes and let there be full churning of heart. By doing this, the influence of sorrow destroys the results of previous bad deeds, the root of old cravings is cut and one gains remembrance of God. From this point of view, sorrow is very helpful in one's spiritual progress. The degree of progress that is achieved in a short period, in the extent of desirelessness, detachment and surrender to God, by owning the influence of sorrow is difficult to achieve by other Sadhans practiced for long periods. Therefore, welcome the sorrow that comes.
4. Do not accept defeat on the coming of sorrow and never despair of attaining the goal of your life. Think over the meaning of unhappy circumstances and by owning their development aspect, transcend circumstances.
5. Sorrow itself is not so harmful as the fear of sorrow. Fear makes one weak and forgetful of difference between what should be done and what should not be done. The unhappy situation becomes more difficult by acting hastily without due thought. "Fear doubles the sorrow, fearlessness halves it, while by proper use of sorrow one gets rid of it for ever". Therefore, never fear sorrow.
6. The revolutionary founder saint of Manava Sewa Sangh has given his very useful and new viewpoint in connection with sorrow for the welfare of mankind. A detailed description of the same is given in the book

entitled "Dukh Ka Prabhav" which is published by the Sangh. The constructive aspect of sorrow that has been presented in this book is basic and it touches the heart, because it is the truth of Maharaj-ji's personal experience.

We heard from Maharaj-ji himself that sorrow came to him in a cruel form while he was still a child. It forced the very intelligent child to give up his aspiration for higher studies, but it precipitated the commencement of his search for Truth. That sorrow enabled him to attain a life which was free from even a trace of sorrow and was full of eternal peace, absolute freedom and ever-new love. Thus, Maharaj-ji's life fully illustrates the influence of sorrow. Once a saintly friend of Maharaj-ji wanted to write a biography of his life and requested him to give some facts of his life. Maharaj-ji replied that if you want to write my biography then just write "Influence of sorrow".



BALANCE OF MIND

It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the balance of mind in present times. The number of persons suffering from mental tension is increasing daily and it has therefore become essential to find a solution for this problem.

We all know that mental tension develops when there is any obstacle in fulfilment of our desires. Psychological studies indicate that these obstacles in fulfilment of desires can assume several forms. Sometimes the circumstances becomes unfavourable or there is decline in the power to enjoy while at other times what one wants to do is not approved by one's own Vivek (faculty of discrimination & Judgement). At times equally strong yet mutually antagonistic multiple desires arise simultaneously in the mind and it becomes impossible to fulfil them. Mental tension develops in the first two situations while in the latter two circumstances severe inner mental conflict is generated which gives rise to all types of mental illness.

Modern psychologists regard development of mental tension and inner conflicts as normal, because they think that origin of desires due to generation of various bodily and mental impulses is a natural phenomenon. From this point of view, they talk about reduction of mental tension and not its abolition. At most they want to make the ego strong so that it may withstand the resentment caused by non-fulfilment of desires and thus enable the person to adapt oneself to circumstances and fulfil one's desires as far as possible while controlling those desires which are opposed to reason or one's own strength. Economists and Sociologists talk of economic and social adjustments to satisfy people by abundant supply

of easily available materials for fulfilment of desires. But the efforts made in this direction appear to have produced contrary results so far. In modern times, the number of persons suffering from mental tension is increasing by leaps and bounds in countries which have made materials for fulfilment of desires abundantly available. This does not mean that free and easy availability of objects is the cause of mental tension. The cause of lack of mental balance is the belief that objects give rise to happiness because of which there is increasing desire for obtaining what one does not have. This alone is the cause for increasing mental tension seen to-day.

Both fulfilment and suppression of desires increase mental tension instead of eliminating it. The influence of happiness resulting from fulfilment of desires gets stamped in our self and so desire for repetition of that happiness arises repeatedly in the mind and thirst for the same keeps on increasing, giving no rest to the individual. Similarly, suppression of desires does not end desires. There is continuous loss of subtle energy for keeping desires in a suppressed state and whenever an opportunity presents itself, these suppressed desires manifest themselves with increased force causing mental imbalance in the individual.

A not so well known fact in this connection is that happiness experienced due to fulfilment of desires is not because of acquisition of desired object but is the result of release of mental tension generated by lack of that object. Thus, feeling of happiness is due to release of mental tension rather than acquiring the object. Similarly, the sorrow experienced due to non-fulfilment of desires is not because of lack of desired object but because of mental imbalance created by resentment. From this point of view happiness and sorrow felt due to fulfilment or non-fulfilment of desires are states of our self which cannot be remedied by any external means.

The more we depend on external means for retaining mental balance the weaker we become due to mental tension and inner conflict.

The increasing mental unrest and helplessness in the human society today is because individuals unnecessarily attach undue importance to transient happiness resulting from fulfilment of desires. We should, therefore, think over the basic cause of this problem. In the light of inherent Vivek (true knowledge) it becomes clear that human life is meant for assimilating peace resulting from renunciation of desires and not for experiencing pleasure and sorrow resulting from fulfilment or non-fulfilment of desires. Peace imparts necessary strength to the individuals for achieving personal salvation and rendering help in establishing an ideal society. Attachment to pleasure from fulfilment of desire is an error, while peace resulting from renunciation of desires is natural.

Philosophy of life suggests that we should change our evaluation of human life. We should live for attaining peace which lies beyond the conflict between happiness and sorrow and for achieving absolute independence and divine love, because this is the real want of man. No lack remains after fulfilment of this real want. From this point of view there is no place in life for attachment to pleasure of desire fulfilment. As soon as we adopt this fundamental viewpoint of life the flood of origin of desires is controlled. The best result of this, however, is that arising of impure and unnecessary desires is checked at source and even if they do arise the seeker of truth renounces them. After this only pure and essential desires and desires that are in accordance with our Vivek and capability are fulfilled. The Sadhak resting in peace of renunciation of desires becomes one with immortality and divine love. It is, therefore, essential to make use of scientific knowledge in the light of human philosophy. Our unrest and helplessness is

increasing because we want to secure peace on the basis of science divorced from philosophy. It is clear, therefore, that if we want to solve this problem in its entity then we should learn to live not for fulfilment of desires but for renunciation of desires. Only then will our personality become healthy, balanced and development oriented.



The world that appears to be giving you sorrow is not perceived either by believers in God or by believers in self, nor even by materialists. The world capable of giving sorrow has been created by the individual himself by association with known Non-truth.

From materialistic point of view the world is the developed, comprehensive and all embracing form of an individual. From spiritual point of view the world is one's own self while from the point of view of belief and faith in God, the world is the incomparable "Leela" of God. Believers in God only behold the Leela (Sport) of their beloved in the form of the world and, by loving Him in these various forms, become Love personified.

Sant Vani

WE MEET HIM AT THE LIMIT OF SHRANTI

(LIMIT OF ONE'S STRENGTH & EFFORT)

Where is the limit of Shranti ? It is located at the point where the whole of spiritual aspirant's endeavour and efforts end. It is at that point that the goal is reached. Before actually reaching that point it is not possible for any one to determine the location of the point, because the point is not fixed. The distance is more for those with greater strength and less eagerness for the goal, less for those with lesser strength but greater eagerness and very close for one with very little strength but great keenness for realisation of truth. O what a wonderful law it is that the requisite for reaching the goal is the same for everyone. This is a very hopeful thing for all seekers of truth. Feel the necessity for immortal life, clearly know what one has to do for fulfilment of the want and do all that one can do in this direction. The want will be fulfilled where one's doing ends; it does not take long at all. This is possible because He who eternally exists is present everywhere and at all times. He is the basis as well as the source of life of entire creation. He resides within everyone and thus knows everyone fully. He alone is eternally related to mankind. Yog is His glory, Gyan is His being and Prem is His nature. The spiritual aspirant becomes one with Him only by becoming Yog, Bodh and Prem personified.

It is the universal personal experience of saints that manifestation of profound peace in Yogis, Tatva-Bodh in seekers of Truth and Bhakti in devotees occurs in the state of effortless rest. In other words, it may be said that for manifestation of real life no effort is required because it exists

already. People experience helplessness, marked dependence and feeling of lack only because they have turned away from that which eternally exists. Sadhna commences when one feels acute need for becoming one with that which exists eternally. Efforts directed towards fulfilment of this want reach their climax at the limit of Shranti where one attains one's goal.

I did not know this fact before and, feeling bewildered at my helplessness, often wondered why I was born in this world filled with sorrow, how to get out of it and where to go after that ? Who created me without my knowledge or without my asking for it and left me utterly helpless to sink or battle alone in this sorrow-filled ocean of the world ? Why is it that what we see does not stay and we cannot see anything else apart from that ? Why are we obliged to walk on without knowing the goal; we do not like a life of sorrow but are obliged to live it ? What sin have I committed ? Who is the judge and under what code of justice has he determined the punishment for me ? I want to know ... who is responsible for my life ? My question reverberated silently in space but I got no answer from any quarter and there was vacuum everywhere. Frustrated, I kept on asking questions and nursed resentment against the ordainer of circumstances. When I became exhausted asking for my rights, the demand for rights became converted into prayer for Divine Grace. After this I got answers to all my questions one by one.

I now see that my Creator has not left me helpless to sink in the ocean of sorrow. He constantly looks after us, his little children, like a supremely compassionate mother. If we want to play in the world He lets us do that and allows the consequences also to come before us. But the moment we leave play and want to have infinite peace in His supremely peaceful and extremely comforting lap, He eagerly lifts us up in His lap because He remains with everyone all the time like

the shadow which never leaves the person. While sending us in the world He advised that "Look, I am the manager of the world. There is nothing for you in the world. Do not covet the world or get attached to it. Regard the world only as a field for your Sadhna (Spiritual practices). Serve persons with the objects you have. Do not hurt anyone. Stay unattached in the world and return with unbounded bliss."

But then something somehow happened. I forgot the Creator's advise and did all that I could in the world. Because of this, the greed and fear of world so gripped me that I had to cry again and again and die by inches. Yes, the supremely generous Manager of all my life affairs, who had taken full responsibility for my life in His powerful hands, had also told me that there is nothing to fear in the world. If someone gets involved in difficulties due to his own folly and feels the need of my help to redeem him, I speedily rescue him. But also, unfortunate that I am, I forgot even these nectar like words of the most compassionate, most well wishing and greatest benefactor of mine. That is why I built a house of my own in His world and proudly, exercising control over it, wanted to live a life of comfort but kept on burning in the never ending fire of mirage of desires. Even then, blessed is the Creator of world and His ever helpful laws, I cannot but offer myself as a sacrifice to Him ! If any person separated from Him for ages and led astray wants to return to Him, He readily shows the way and if the person gets tired of walking, He Himself comes and meets him where he is. Anyone who has ever met Him, in whatever form it may be, has done so at the limit of point of Shranti.

In 1956, a Sadhak heard this nice talk. In dream she saw—it has become dusk; the path is uphill in a desolate forest. Clouds have gathered and it has started raining with gusty winds. There is no companion but still the Sadhak resolved to proceed on. She had just taken one step forward

when a saint came from the forest and said "Do not proceed further because the path is rugged and you cannot tread it. Therefore, the one to whom you want to go will Himself come and meet you here". The point was very clear and the assurance given by the saint was very true and eternal. But still I was so headstrong and proud that I regarded this loving message from the most compassionate one as a mere dream, and did not give up my attempts to attain perfection by self effort, but could not succeed in this.

There appears to be a hidden principle behind this real fact of life. There is no place for wrong action or useless action in human life, but our limited ego is not destroyed so long as the sense of doership persists on the basis of good actions or even Sadhna requiring effort.

The ego melts and the goal is achieved only when the sense of doership vanishes and only keen aspiration for fulfilment of want remains and one becomes effortless on realising that nothing else can be done either by way of action or thought. This is the personal experience of great seers and saints; to entertain doubt about this is only to put obstacles in one's own path. This does not mean that one should not try to achieve perfection in Sadhna; one must do all that can be done in this direction. The greater with which one accomplishes one's duty, the sooner one shall reach the point where nothing that one can do would help and yet one finds it impossible to rest without achieving the objective. I have heard it from the saint that before one becomes aware of having reached this point one gets the light of knowledge and God's love.

This is what happened in the life of Rajkumar Sidharth who was a great thinker. We hear that he was not satisfied even after doing study, contemplation and penance. He could do nothing else, but keen desire for Truth persisted and so he attained Nirvan and became one with Truth.

The great Bhakt Suteekshan proceeded very eagerly to meet Lord Ram when he learnt about his coming. But he felt that he had hardly any jap, Sadhan or penance to his credit and so wondered whether God would meet him. This doubt persisted as long as Suteekshan thought about himself only, but when he remembered about the great love that God has for those who have surrendered themselves to Him, he became so elated that he not only forgot the path but also lost awareness of self. And then God met him there on the path itself.

There are many many instances of such happenings in the lives of Sadhaks who attained perfection. There appear to be two important facts in this connection. One is that when only one aspiration remains in life it is fulfilled automatically. From this point of view it is very important to have one pointed devotion to the ideal of achieving one's goal. If one has liking, even in a small measure, for any thing other than one's goal, then one cannot become one pointed with the result that life force becomes diverted into different channels and desire for Sadhna becomes diluted. When only one objective remains then whole of life force proceeds swiftly towards its real source and becomes one with it.

The second important point is that so long as even slightest trace of ego remains, the objective cannot be achieved. When the sadhak cannot tolerate such state and finds himself incapable of doing anything else, then he reaches the limit of Shranti. Surrender in the real sense of the term comes only then, and this results in egolessness and achievement of the goal.

I do not know what happens when all distance, difference and separateness from the goal vanishes, but from difficulties arising during the course of spiritual practices, it becomes clear that for advancing on the path of Truth it is essential to be completely free from all sense of doership. It is

for this reason that the Creator takes great care to ensure that pride of doership does not remain in the sadhak; He keeps on converting progress on the basis of thought into progress on the basis of His grace. The more one gets glimpses of His benefactions the greater the heartfelt gratefulness to Him increases. Blessed is human life and blessed is its Creator !



The world is a training ground for meeting God. One who can live properly in the world can easily meet God; even if one forgets, God Himself comes to meet such a person.

One making proper use of existing circumstances does not have to await success; success awaits such a person. If you perform each action as worship of God then you will not have to remember God; God Himself will remember you.

Sant Vani

MOTIVELESS GRACE OF GOD

Divine grace is always without motive. Bestowing of human life is itself an instance of motiveless grace of the supremely kind and benevolent God. That human birth is not the result of any past meritorious actions is proved by the fact that such actions can be performed only after and not before one gets the gift of human life.

Man is the highest and best creation in the universe because it is man alone who can reject the attraction and lure of the manifest world and strive to attain the unseen real or true life of the individual. The living beings in the entire subhuman creation are under compulsion to experience happiness and sorrow of the world. It is only because of motiveless Divine Grace that mankind alone has been granted the freedom of entry into a life which is beyond both happiness and sorrow.

We hear that the supremely benevolent God of motiveless Grace is also so infinitely powerful that none can conquer Him, He is so infinitely loving that His love encompasses the entire creation and He is also so infinitely attractive that everyone feels naturally attracted towards Him. Man's origin is from one possessing such Divine attributes and he has also been granted freedom that if he so desires, he can partake of these glories and lead a Divine life by loving God and becoming desireless and pure.

The saying that "God created man in His own image" is literally true. This creation of man in His own image is yet another instance of motiveless Grace of the Divine Creator. The light of Vivek (Discriminating faculty) has been given to each one of us, without our asking for it, so that we may become desireless and free from impurities of all types. The power of belief and faith has also been bestowed, unasked, so

that we may regard God alone as our own. The bestowing of these powers, which give man a special position of importance in the creation, is again because of motiveless Divine Grace on man.

The search for Truth and longing for Divine love are the basic want of man since birth. Even the most favourable circumstances fail to satisfy a person until this basic want is fulfilled. At one time I considered this to be a bane of human life which hurt me, but now I regard this persistence of lack of satisfaction unless the basic want is realised, as a boon from God. How can the insentient world satisfy a man who longs for Divine love and eternal life ? Blessed indeed is this wonderful creation of the Divine Architect.

The divinity of human life begins to manifest itself as soon as the lure of the visible world is shed, and this astonishes the world. The whole world develops a liking for the person who is free from all types of desire and is fully independent. Both the world and its Creator are enchanted by a devotee who sacrifices personal pleasure as well as the bliss of freedom for the sake of God about whom one has only heard. What but motiveless Grace could lead to bestowing of so much beauty on His own creation that it enchants even the Divine Creator Himself !

The above is applicable for persons whose life is adorned with the attributes of true humanity. But I behold nothing but Divine Grace in all the aspects and all the stages of human life. There is arrangement for the protection of all human beings from the moment of birth till the time of death. Physical elements like land, water, air and light have been made equally available for all free of cost, irrespective of whether they make right or wrong use of these. Not only this; the freedom and strength to attain the highest type of life has also been given to us. But by ignoring the dictates of our reasoning faculty and desiring worldly objects, we develop attachment, greed and craving for pleasure and thus get

bound in disease and sorrow etc. Even then the light of Vivek is not extinguished and God continues to be kind to us and has been found to guide and protect us even when we turn our face away from Him. This further illustrates the motivelessness of Divine Grace. Even after committing innumerable errors, if we now pine for a pure life, all the accumulated sins of previous lives are washed off by the keenness of present desire for a pure life. The source of all strength is flowing continuously and the shower of mercy and compassion is continuing unabated all the time. Therefore, when the desire for Truth and love is kindled even when we are utterly weak, necessary strength is automatically granted for attaining success and consequent bliss. Blessed is the merciful Lord and blessed is His motiveless Grace !

Not only this, God's mercy and Grace is available to all seekers of truth irrespective of whether they believe in God or not and whether they pray for Divine Grace or not. The only difference is that one who beholds grace of God remains immersed in the bliss of this experience and by taking God's support becomes free from all fears and worries for all time to come. It is the supremely merciful Lord's motiveless Grace alone that removes the worries of the worried, liberates the bound and provides protection to the unprotected !



SADHAN, BHAJAN & POOJAN

(Spiritual Practices, Remembrance & Worship of God)

Man can perceive things with the help of his sensory organs, mind and the light of Vivek (Discriminating Faculty). With the help of eyes and other sensory organs one can see the world, the earth, sky, water, air, light and their various solid combinations and so one says that the world exists.

Mind reveals continuous change in all that one sees in the world. Daylight changes into the darkness of night; the tenderness of infancy changes into the recklessness of youth and that, in turn, changes into the infirmity of old age. Thus, on the basis of thought, the person says that world is ever changing and in a state of flux.

The light of Vivek shows that one who perceives the change is himself unchanging. Everything is changing but the seer who perceives the change remains the same as before. On the basis of this knowledge, in the light of Vivek, the person says that my relation with the world is not true as there can be no true relationship between the non-changing and the one subject to change. All these three viewpoints have their use in the individual's daily life.

Under the influence of knowledge gained by the sense organs one regards the visible world as true, beautiful and capable of giving pleasures and so one naturally gets attracted towards it. But in the light of thought one begins to have doubt about the existence of world, its beauty and its capability of giving pleasure. The effect of following the guidance of Vivek is that one discards association with the visible world. It is important to attach great significance to Vivek in human life because without this the conflicts of life are not resolved. Attraction of the world does not let the

individual rise above body consciousness. Even though one has to undergo unbearable sufferings of repeated births and deaths on regarding oneself as the body, the individual does not give up the craving for bodily pleasures by allowing the mind to function under the influence of sense organs rather than the guidance of Vivek. One is obliged to give up pleasure but one does not willingly give up the craving for pleasure. This is the main folly of man which is the root cause of all unhappiness and sorrow.

Sometimes we ask why has the Creator made the world so attractive that we are irresistibly drawn towards it. Saints say that we do not get attached to the world because the world is so attractive. It is because we identify ourselves with the body that we get attached to the worldly objects. In the light of Vivek once we refuse to identify ourselves with the body the attraction of the world ceases. Therefore, the first step in the path of spirituality is to follow the guidance of one's Vivek. I may not know who I am but I do know from experience that I am different from the changing objects of the visible world. In the light of this knowledge, as soon as I give up identification with the body, life of Sadhana commences. For a Sadhan-Yukt life (life imbued with spiritual practices), the knowledge gained by the senses is to be utilised for action and the knowledge gained by mind is to be utilised for Sadhna while the light of Vivek gives true knowledge about Sadhan. Not accepting relationship with the visible world in the light of Vivek and thoughtfully utilising objects for service of the world leads to spiritual progress.

The one who created the lovely world has also given the mind which shows continuous process of change in all that one can see in the world and by giving light of Vivek has revealed His own unchanging nature. We suffer from unbearable sorrow by regarding only what we can see as true ignoring the other two viewpoints. We cannot blame the Creator for this because the fault is our own. Unless we

remove this fault of ours we can not get peace, freedom or Divine love and without these the life can never be full or complete.

Since the root cause of all our sorrow is regarding ourselves as the body and the body as ours, the only way to secure release from all suffering is to sever relationship with the visible world. If you cannot live alone without any objects or companions and cannot rest content without regarding someone as your own, then accept the unseen God as your own. Regarding God as one's own is the chief means of getting His Bhakti.

One gets Bhakti and liberation as a result of Satsang. Satsang means the discarding of relationship with non-truth in the light of Vivek and establishing relationship with Truth on the basis of Faith.

After doing this the whole life of a believer in God becomes Sadhan, Bhajan and Poojan. Sadhan means not doing what one knows to be wrong. Proper use of what one has got only for the sake of pleasing God is Poojan. Kindling the remembrance of beloved God is Bhajan.

The meaning of not doing what one knows to be wrong is to become faultless ourselves. According to Manav Sewa Sangh, becoming faultless ourselves is the only universal Sadhan. Doing good actions according to one's temperament can be helpful in rousing inner feelings and in getting rid of attachment to action. But it is not correct to regard them as Sadhan because they cannot but lead to loss of independence of persons and everyone may not be capable of doing them because of the differences in temperament and capability of individuals. Another great loss in this is that the person becomes so entangled in doing Sadhan with the help of body that it takes him a long time to rise above the level of action and thus the important question of change in self is relegated to the background because of which there is no change in life. The daily routine changes, but there is no basic change within

and therefore Peace, Freedom and Love do not become manifest in life. Thus, not doing what one knows to be wrong is the only universal Sadhan based on the above scientific truth. Every person can do this Sadhan independently and the natural effect of this is commencement of a change in one's own self.

Becoming faultless is helpful in making the believers in God full of Poojan and Bhajan. The remembrance of God becomes very keen and strong when relationship with non-truth is snapped. The remembrance of supreme sweetness of God is itself so sweet that it is greatly relished by both the devotee and his God. Bhajan means continuous remembrance of the Divine, which God likes. One does not need the help of body for this. In fact, the devotee progressively loses body consciousness in remembrance of God and ultimately, crossing the barrier of body, merges in the bliss of the cosmic beloved. The bounds of limited ego are thus transcended and the ego gets sublimated into the element of love. This is the highest achievement of man and the supreme benefit of human life; this is union of the limited with the unlimited and the crossing of created beyond the Creation.

Oh ! once this process gets started somehow, the strong attraction of the unknown forcibly keeps on drawing the spiritual aspirant, who does not even become conscious of how he crossed the most difficult obstacles in the path. O lost pilgrim on the path, how long will you keep on straying in the attractive net of your own creation ? Come, let us go together on the Straight Path.



BHAGWAT BHAKTI

There is conflict of happiness and sorrow in human life. We like happiness but have to perforce suffer from sorrow which no one likes. The aim of human life is to attain Divine life of bliss which is beyond both happiness and sorrow. In the light of Vivek we know that unless one gives up craving for enjoyment of pleasure one cannot get rid of sorrow and weakness. A philosophical truth of human life is that the life of everpresent strength, freedom and divine love which we all aspire for is actually present within us all the time. That which is present within us does not require any bodily effort for its manifestation. Progress towards realisation of such a life commences only by renouncing desires and giving up all effort and support of non-self. It is therefore essential for all seekers of truth to become desireless.

Man has been endowed since birth with the triple faculties of power to do work, power to think and discriminate between right and wrong and the power to have belief and faith in what one cannot see or understand. Three fundamental paths for spiritual progress have been propounded based on these three inherent faculties of man. The path of performance of one's duty is based on the power of doing work; the path of Gyan (knowledge) is based on the power to think and discriminate while the path of devotion to God is based on the power of belief and faith. Spiritual aspirants are free to choose any of these three paths for their spiritual progress according to their own liking, ability and circumstances. But renunciation of desires and attachments is essential for spiritual aspirants of all these three paths because without it one can neither become devoted to duty nor detach oneself from the physical bodies or love God, and without

these no one can get Vishram which is essential for attainment of Divine life. It is possible to get Vishram (Absolute rest or repose) by following any of the three paths of spirituality.

The path of faith and devotion is an independent path for spiritual progress. According to law of nature there can be no creation without a creator and no perception without light. We can not see our support and source of light with the help of our physical senses and mind but feel His need all the same. The one who belongs to all and is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient is our own and is present within us even now even though we cannot see or comprehend Him. The only way to acquire love of God is to accept Him as our own with full faith and belief in His existence and glories. A fact based on experience is that it is a mistake to regard the body and objects etc. as ours because they are with us only temporarily, but equally great is the mistake of not regarding the Creator of the universe as our own.

Once we accept God as our own we should merge our faith, belief and relationship with everyone else into faith, belief and relationship with God alone. Not only this; all the multifarious desires of a believer in God merge in his one aspiration of love for the Divine and all his actions become acts of worship of the same Divinity. In other words, the entire inner as well as outer life of the devotee gets permeated with faith in God alone and this entitles one to eternal union with God. All conflict between sense organs, mind and intellect of such devotees ceases, because all these become centred around the one thought of achievement of goal of life. All the desires can merge in one want only for one who is immutable and complete in every respect. Desires for objects and persons cannot merge in one want because each desire gives rise to several others and the individual thus gets bound in desires which turn him away from God. Therefore, the one want for Reality alone is conducive to spiritual progress.

Belief and faith in God establishes relationship with God and this naturally awakens constant remembrance of the Divine which automatically eliminates thoughts of everything else. One in whom continuous remembrance has awakened becomes united with whom he remembers. Remembrance of world arouses a feeling of lack in the individual because one cannot secure worldly objects in the real sense of the term. By contrast, remembrance of God eliminates all feeling of lack because God is ever with us; the feeling of distance, difference and separation from God is only because we have forgotten Him.

Constant remembrance of God does not come by practice; it is achieved only by faith and belief in God. A believer in God automatically loses all fears and worries because all the responsibilities of one who has full faith in God get transferred to God. Thus, a believer in God gets Vishram and by God's grace his Sadhan and Life become one and his existence becomes sublimated into infinite and deep love of God alone. Love is greatly relished by God, and offering of this love is all that a devotee desires.

Once a spiritual aspirant has acquired full faith in God nothing else remains to be done by him because no pride of any kind remains in such a devotee. Vishram becomes easy and natural for the Sadhak who is free from pride but one has to carefully avoid any feeling of pride of having become prideless. Even-mindedness and love manifest only when one has renounced the pride of pridelessness. The responsibility for all this rests with God who naturally fulfills it because motiveless grace is His very nature. All the works of a God-surrendered devotee are carried out by God. Therefore, to surrender oneself to God is the highest endeavour of the devotee. Sadhak gets Vishram when all efforts cease and deep love for God is then spontaneously kindled in the heart. The fullness of life is in awakening of love for the Divine.



LOVE OF GOD

All of us feel the need of someone who is not only capable of loving, protecting and staying with us all the time, but can also fulfil our real want for everlasting peace, freedom and love. Obviously, no one in the world can fulfil this aspiration of ours and so, on the basis of our want as well as the advice of our Guru and unflinching faith in the writings of sacred scriptures, we accept the existence of God and His glories. It is not possible for anyone to describe the infinite glories of God, but for the sake of acquiring love for God and establishing our relationship with Him, it is sufficient to accept with full faith the following facts about God and His glories which have been stated in all the scriptures :

1. God is, and He is one without a second.
2. He is omnipotent.
3. He is present everywhere and so He is within us also.
4. He exists eternally and so is present even now.
5. God alone is eternally our own and we have direct relationship with Him only.

Let us briefly consider how the acceptance of above facts transforms our life and influences our spiritual practices for attaining salvation.

Acknowledgement of existence of an omnipotent God and His presence within us even now should make us fearless and without any worries whatsoever. Acceptance of the fact that God is within us makes it unnecessary for us to search for God anywhere outside our own self. This should also eliminate all physical and mental effort on our part because these are not necessary for realising what is present within us

already. Indeed, it is only by becoming effortless and giving up all physical and mental effort as well as the help and support of all that is non-self that one can realise the self within. Another corollary of acceptance of the fact that God is present within us even now will be that we shall give up hope of realising God in future and thus realisation of God will become a question of the immediate present and this will naturally intensify our keenness for realising God in the present life itself.

Firm acceptance of the fact that God alone is our own will kindle love for God in our heart and this will naturally lead to His continuous remembrance. It is a fact that we naturally come to love and remember whomsoever and whatsoever we regard as our own because our self is so dear to us. Even if love is not kindled in our heart for some reason, we should feel sorry about it. Genuine sorrow at not having been able to acquire love of God will also kindle love for God in course of time.

A universal truth is that our mind gets naturally attached to anything that we love. We may not know God but our mind knows what God is like. So when we love God our mind gets automatically attached to God without any effort on our part. A saint has said that the bird of our mind keeps on flying here and there only as long as love for God has not awakened in our heart; once love is kindled the mind will get attached to God for ever and then nothing else remains to be done.

An acid test of our love for God is that we should not want anything from God in return for our love. If we want to get anything, whatsoever, from God in return for our love it means that we do not really love God but love that object and want God's help for getting that object. Many of us love God for the pleasure of at least getting a glimpse of God and His glory. But those who love God with any selfish motive

whatsoever can never become lovers of God. So love God for love's sake only. Even God becomes restless to meet such lovers.

There are several instances of such selfless lovers in ancient as well as contemporary history. While going to forest, when Lord Rama advised Lakshman to stay back for looking after the parents, Lakshman said that "preaching of duty should be done only to those who want anything. I want nothing but yourself." This silenced Rama and He, therefore, asked Lakshman only to secure mother Sumitra's approval. While Sitaji accompanied Rama to the forest, Urmila denied herself the pleasure of accompanying her husband because she well knew that Lakshmanji's duty was to serve Rama and she did not want to become an obstacle in the path of her husband's duty. These are instances of real love.

Instances of similar selfless love for their husband can be seen in the lives of Yashodhra and Vishnu Priya. Once Yashodhra asked her ascetic husband why he presumed that she will be an obstacle in the path of his spiritual progress and Lord Buddha had to apologise to her for not telling her about his prior intention of renouncing the world. Vishnu Priya was only a girl of 13 or 14 years and she loved her husband very much yet she allowed Chaitnaya Mahaprabhu to embrace Sanyas even though this meant great sacrifice and suffering for her. Lovers consider that their only duty is to offer selfless love to their lover.

This fact is well illustrated in the lives of Gopees of Vrindaban. When Lord Krishna was going to Mathura, they did not allow the 'Rath' to proceed until the Lord assured them that He will return early, but the Lord did not return and this made the Gopees extremely sad and restless because of the agony of separation. But when some worldly wise person advised them to go to Mathura to meet Krishna they

replied that they did not want to go because Krishna wants to live separately. This again shows that lovers do not even dream about personal pleasure and their only desire is to give love to their beloved.

Therefore, if you wish to love God, regard Him as your own, He is Almighty and one without a second, He alone is our own and is within us even now. You will undoubtedly achieve salvation as soon as you accept the above truth.



Do not be afraid of obstacles; each obstacle is a means for one's progress. Only those persons have progressed in the world who encountered difficulties at each step. Obstacles awaken the individual, remove the errors and unfold hidden power, but enslave one who is afraid of them.

Therefore, learn to be kind to your self, do not see the faults of others. If possible, see your own faults and try to remove them. Do not accept defeat. When an individual puts in one's full effort then the universal energy helps automatically.

Sant Vani

KNOWING THE 'SELF' OR 'I'

We are conscious of our existence in the present and know that it is bound within the limits of birth and death. I do not remember who was I before birth nor do I know what will become of me after death. So, all that I clearly know is that I exist at present, but have no clear answer to the questions who am I, what am I or why was I born in the world.

One who is conscious of one's limited self, perceives the objects of the world as separate from oneself and feels attraction for them. This attraction for the limited beauty of worldly objects is responsible for all the sorrows of life. The objects that we see are neither attractive nor repulsive intrinsically and so do not attract or repulse whenever seen. Our limited self has attraction for the world and so the world is perceived. Indulgence in worldly pleasures makes one realise that craving for pleasure increases but the pleasures disappear leaving a feeling of void in us. We are all aware of the pain of this helplessness.

The same limited self which has attraction for worldly objects also has keen desire for knowledge of Truth. In the light of Vivek (True knowledge) one sees that all happiness dependent upon others, including one's gross, subtle and causal bodies, is limited and anyone who desires it can never be independent. Once, therefore, rightly concludes that limited happiness is not life. Knowing this, the spiritual aspirant loses attraction for all that one can see; he does not destroy the body or the world but makes use of these without getting attached to them.

The same ego which has attraction for the world as well as search for truth in it also has craving for love. Because of

this every person experiences the basic want for a sorrow-free and independent life full of love. This is a special feature of man. It is because of this that even a person fallen to the depths of degradation experiences a desire for self-improvement. This basic want of man never disappears and is always fulfilled because it is the real life of man. It is for achieving such a sorrow-free and independent life of happiness that one undertakes spiritual practices, but the delay in achieving such a life baffles the spiritual aspirant. On reflection over this problem it appears that one main reason for it is that unless one has full faith in the actual existence of the type of life one wants, all efforts for achieving it remain unproductive. The question of spiritual practices does not arise if one is in doubt about the actual existence of the objective itself.

Generally, the spiritual aspirants do feel the need for real life but find it difficult to accept the existence of what one cannot see or understand with one's sensory organs and the mind. How to accept the existence of God whom one cannot see or understand ? I personally experienced this difficulty because of which I could not advance even one step on the path of Sadhna. But then the truth of life came before me in the form of a resolve. I was advised to accept the following truths for attaining peace, independence and divine love :

1. There is nothing personally my own.
2. I do not need anything.
3. Almighty God alone is my own.

I heard the truth and tried to accept it also, but could do so only hesitatingly. The result was that my progress was held up and my spiritual efforts were fruitless.

That there is nothing personally my own is a scientific fact of physical aspect of life. "I need nothing" is a truth of

Philosophy. Acceptance of Almighty God as one's own is based on faith. I liked these statements and repeated them several times for my own sake, but all my efforts proved fruitless and nothing had a live influence on my life, with the result that sorrow persisted, I did not feel light and life continued to be bereft of Joy. But when the pain of failure in life became acute and unbearable I realised my mistake of having only a weak faith in the actual existence of a life full of supreme peace, absolute independence and infinite love. It was because of this that my Sadhna was lifeless. On the basis of this personal experience I advise the spiritual aspirants to have full faith in the existence of sorrow-free and supremely independent life of bliss. Success is certain. The want becomes keen when one has full faith in the existence of one's objective.

According to Manav Sewa Sangh, the awakening of keen want and its fulfilment occur simultaneously. Want is always fulfilled and then one attains real life which is divine and full of freedom and bliss. It is because such a life already exists in man that one intensely feels the want for it and when the want is fulfilled one actually experiences this life. So, there is no place for any doubt about existence of such a life. Achievement of this life does not depend upon objects, individuals or circumstances and so the want for it is always fulfilled. By full faith in this one's entire life force gets attached to Sadhna with the result that life and Sadhna become one and success is achieved because of full faith in the existence of one's objective—God.

In conclusion it may be stated that 'I' has no independent existence of its own. Our ego has attraction for the world, search for Truth and craving for love in it. The attraction for world vanishes in the light of inherent Vivek. The persistent and insistent longing for an absolutely independent life full of supreme love is itself a proof of actual existence of such a life.

Full faith in the existence of such a life is the key for the actual manifestation of this life already existing in us. On attaining this life the search for truth ends, individual love merges in the supreme love and thus the limited self merges in the infinite self, losing its separate existence. This is fullness of life and its achievement is the objective of one's life.



The one whose motiveless Grace purifies and gives real life as well as strength, will certainly fulfil one's prayer for proper use of strength, courage to act in accordance with one's Vivek, renunciation of attachment and hatred and attainment of a life of Service Renunciation and Love.

Sant Vani

LOOKING WITHIN

(Self-Introspection, Individual Satsang,
OR
Satsang with one's own self)

Looking within, or seeing one's existing inner condition, is very helpful in one's spiritual progress and one is, therefore, advised to make it a habit to practice it regularly. For doing self-introspection one should just sit down quietly for a few minutes without doing anything or thinking anything. This should be done at least twice daily, preferably as first thing on getting up in morning and the last thing before retiring to bed at night, because at these two times one's mind and the environment is more likely to be quiet.

During this period of quiet self-introspection a picture of one's own inner state presents itself before the eye of one's mind and in the light of inherent Vivek (faculty of discrimination and judgement), one becomes aware of the Vikars (mental impurities like attachment, greed, anger, jealousy, pride and desire for personal pleasure etc.) that may be present in one's personality. During this period of physical and mental quietness one also becomes aware of one's real want or aspiration and the goal of one's life as well as the means to be adopted for attaining the same.

Generally, people think that what one wants is good arrangement for comfortable living with proper arrangement for food, education of children and treatment of illness etc. But these are merely desires and not the real want or aspiration of an individual. The real want of man is for everlasting peace independence and bliss. The difference between desires and real want is that for fulfilment of desires one has to depend upon objects, individuals and

circumstances, while for fulfilment of one's real want one has not to depend upon any of these things. In fact, the chief requirement for fulfilment of real want is to experience keen need for the same and not to rest content until the aspiration is fulfilled. Desires establish relationship with the world while one's aspiration establishes relationship with God. Another difference between desires and real want is that fulfilment of desires does not satisfy anyone for ever as is evidenced by the fact that fresh desires crop up on fulfilment of previous desires, while one becomes satisfied for ever once the real want is fulfilled.

A clear knowledge of the Vikars present in one's personality, the goal of one's life and the means for attaining the same is essential for spiritual progress and one comes to know about all these during self-introspection which constitutes the first part of Individual Satsang. The second part of this Satsang is to remind oneself that "I am different from my body. The body is mortal and it is made of earthly materials while I am immortal and essentially divine in nature. The aim of my life is to achieve everlasting peace, freedom and bliss of divine love as well as liberation from the bondage and misery of repeated births and deaths. The precious gift of present life has been bestowed on me by the motiveless grace of God specifically for attainment of goal of life and I must achieve the same in this life itself by becoming Nirvikar (free from impurities) and surrendering myself unconditionally to God by renouncing all personal desires". One should also ponder deeply over the four fundamental truths of human life which are as follows :

1. There is nothing personally my own in the world.
2. I need nothing from the world.
3. Almighty God alone is my own.
4. Everything in the world belongs to God.

The aspiration for attainment of goal of life becomes live and strong and stable by reminding oneself about it regularly every morning and evening during self-introspection.

The first pre-requisite for spiritual progress is to become free from Vikars like attachment, greed, anger, jealousy, pride and craving for enjoyment of pleasure etc. It is because of these mental impurities and multifarious desires that our life-force gets scattered in different channels and we experience restlessness and inability to concentrate, or to attach and detach the mind at will. When the mind becomes pure and quiet, the scattered energy of the life-force gets concentrated at one point and one then gets the necessary strength to detach one-self from one's physical bodies and experience the bliss of one's independent existence quite apart from one's physical and subtle bodies. Attainment of goal of life is possible only in the background of purity of mind. The simplest and easiest method to purify the mind is to refrain from doing what one knows to be wrong and resolving not to repeat a wrong done already.

God has created man in His own image and so there is limitless power in one's resolve, because of which even the combined forces of the whole world cannot shake one's faith or resolve. Therefore, if we decide to get rid of our impurities we can definitely do so.

Some spiritual aspirants say that they see the Truth and the path leading to the goal, but lack the necessary strength to walk on the path. If such sadhaks do not rest content without achieving the goal of life and sincerely pray to God for strength, then necessary strength is granted. Even if one does not pray, but feels genuinely sorry about one's inability to get rid of the weakness by one's own efforts, then necessary strength for overcoming the weakness is automatically granted by the benevolent law of life. Nothing can possibly be easier than this and so no spiritual aspirant should ever despair of achieving the goal of one's life.

In conclusion it may be stated that self-introspection or satsang with one's own self, not only shows us our inner weaknesses and makes us aware of our real want but also reveals the means for attaining the goal of our life. It is for this reason that it has been assigned a pivotal role in the spiritual practices suggested by Manav Sewa Sangh for the welfare of mankind. One is advised to make it a point to practice it at least twice daily as it is very helpful in removing the impurities of one's mind and in attainment of the goal of one's life.

By remembering the goal of one's life at least twice daily and by giving primary importance to achieving this goal in the present life itself, the keenness for fulfilment of one's aspiration for eternal peace and bliss increases remarkably. Because of this the desires for personal pleasures vanish and each and every action of the spiritual aspirant becomes instrumental in attainment of the goal of life and it thus becomes easy and natural to achieve the goal.



By benevolent law of nature sorrow comes only for destroying sorrow. Fear of sorrow is only due to cowardice of spiritual aspirant which has no place in a development oriented life.

Sant Vani

IMPORTANCE OF SEWA

(SELFLESS SERVICE)

Man has been endowed since birth with the triple faculties of power to do work, power to think and discriminate between right and wrong and the power to have belief and faith in one whom one can not see or understand. Three fundamental paths for spiritual progress have been propounded on the basis of these three inherent powers of man (Karam-Yog, Gyan-Yog and Bhakti-Yog).

The power to do work can be utilised either for fulfilment of desires and obtaining objects for personal pleasure or for rendering service to others. Working for fulfilment of desires and for personal pleasure leads to attachment and dependence on objects and persons for personal happiness. This no one likes. Further, it is everyone's experience that while some desires of everyone are fulfilled, all of one's desires are never fulfilled and the result of this is that one gets into the bondage of experiencing short spells of happiness and much longer periods of unhappiness consequent upon the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of desires. Indulgence in pleasures also makes one weak and prone to various diseases. In view of the above undesirable consequences of working for fulfilment of desires, the only proper use of one's ability to do work is in rendering service to others.

Work done selflessly for the welfare of others is called Sewa. True sewa can be done only when we regard others also as our own and have the same regard for their happiness and welfare as we have for our own self and those related to us. It is a fact of life that everyone in the world is related to each

other in one way or the other. From materialistic point of view all of us live in the same world, share the same air, light and water with others in the world and are in fact an integral constituent of the world body. From spiritual point of view, the self (Atma) of each living being is one, while from the point of view of faith in God, we are all the children of one God.

The natural result of regarding others also as our own will be that one will not think of harming others in any case and will think of their welfare only. Not only this, one will feel happy on seeing happiness of others and feel sorrow and compassion at the sorrow of others, and do whatever one can to alleviate their sorrow. We can physically serve only those who are close to us but can wish for the happiness and welfare of all living beings. In fact, this is all that the world expects us to do.

One thing more which is essential for being able to do sewa in the real sense of the term, is that one should not only expect nothing whatsoever in return for rendering service but also feel no pride of having rendered selfless service. There are many people who serve and help others for the sake of money or for earning name, fame, honour or gratitude of people and feel proud of their selfless service. It is nice to perform good actions but bad to feel proud of rendering selfless service.

Selfless service performed in this manner is very helpful in one's spiritual progress and in attainment of goal of one's life. It also helps in establishment of an ideal society free from conflict and strife and this helps in preservation of world peace. By not harming anyone and having good-will for everyone one's mind becomes pure. By rendering selfless service to the best of one's ability one gets free from attachment to work as well as attachment to the person

served. By sharing the happiness of others one's own life becomes happy and the great benefit that accrues from this is that fresh desires for personal pleasure do not arise in one's mind. Similarly, compassion experienced on seeing sorrow of others leads to elimination of existing desires for personal pleasure and thus one becomes desireless and free from attachments. The natural result of this is that one attains peace and freedom from the bondage of the body and the world and this entitles one for eternal life of bliss. Even from mundane point of view, the bodily needs of one who serves selflessly are amply provided honourably by the grateful society. It is a law of nature that what one gives selflessly comes back in a much greater measure and so it is in one's own interest to selflessly serve those who are in need of help, specially the children, the aged, the sick and those engaged in search of Truth or immersed in love of God. By not feeling proud of rendering service one's ego becomes attenuated and this helps in coming closer to God. Finally, if service is rendered with the object of pleasing God, then each act of such a devotee becomes worship of God which increases one's love for God and ultimately leads to union with the Divine.

In conclusion it may be stated that from spiritual point of view, sewa is the practical method for removal of attachment to objects and individuals and this gives one the necessary strength to renounce the world. From materialistic point of view, sewa provides proper outlet for one's work energy in the service of those in need. It also helps in creation of an ideal society and preservation of world peace and this symbolises the unity of individual life with world life. From the point of view of faith in God, sewa is practical worship of the Divine for the love of God. Thus, sewa should be an integral part of the life of all seekers of truth.

Although performance of sewa does require bodily effort as well as help of others, it does not bind but actually releases the individual from attachment and thus helps one to attain immortal life, provided it is performed selflessly with the object of achieving non-attachment and cleansing of mind as well as love of God. In view of the above considerations Manav Sewa Sangh has given sewa a very important place in its scheme of spiritual practices.

Many spiritual aspirants have attained salvation by adopting sewa as their principal sadhna. The life of Shabri, an ignorant and uneducated devotee of low caste, may be quoted briefly to illustrate how one can attain salvation by selfless service alone. The only sadhna done by Shabri was to collect firewood from the forest and deposit it secretly in the cottage of Matang Rishi and other saints living in the hermitage in Dand-Karanya forest. She also used to remove the pebbles and thorns and sweep the path leading from the hermitage to the lake where the saints went for bath so that their feet may not be hurt. Her selfless, prideless and loving service purified her heart and attracted the attention of Matang Rishi who wanted to know the person rendering this secret service to the saints. So they kept awake one night and saw Shabri engaged in her work. The saint felt very happy but Shabri felt very small and unworthy because of her low caste, without realising that selfless service of saints had purified her already. Judging her worth, the Rishi admitted her in the hermitage and gave her Initiation also. He also assured her that when Lord Ram comes to this forest, He will Himself come to the hermitage to bless her.

The Rishi could give this assurance because he knew that sadhaks who serve saints with whole-hearted devotion are very dear to the Lord. Shabri had full faith in the words of the saint and so she was obsessed with this sweet and continuous

expectation of coming of God. The natural outcome of physical service is that one who renders service becomes one with the beloved and this is what happened in her case. On reaching Dand-Karanya forest the Lord did go to Shabri's cottage to savour her love for Him. The Lord so much relishes the love of prideless devotees that for tasting it He forgets His own greatness. God did not feel as if He has blessed Shabri with His vision. On the contrary, He said that by offering such sweet fruit you have removed my weariness from walking in the forest. Blessed is God and fortunate are His devotees !



Generosity, Independence and Love are in the nature of Man. Generosity makes one useful for the world; Love makes one useful for God, while Independence is useful for one's own self.

Sant Vani

DESIRELESSNESS—THE CHIEF ENDEAVOUR OF MAN

Longing for Truth and Love along with desire for enjoyment of worldly pleasures are inherent in each individual and because of these, man is indivisibly related both to the world and its Creator or God. The relation with God is for realisation of one's basic aspiration for knowledge of Truth and Bliss of Divine Love, while relationship with the world is for fulfilment of bodily needs and the desire for pleasure. The aspiration for Truth and Love is fulfilled by attaining 'Yog' (union with Truth or God), while for fulfilment of bodily needs and enjoyment of pleasure one has to depend upon the world.

The chief endeavour of one's life so far has been to somehow fulfil one's bodily needs and extract as much bodily enjoyment as possible from this sorrow-filled world. But it is our own experience that this has only led to dependence on the world, worries, fears, transient happiness due to fulfilment of some desires and sorrow due to non-fulfilment of many desires. No one likes these consequences of attempts to fulfil desires. Moreover, even the best circumstances fail to satisfy a person unless one's basic aspiration for eternal life, knowledge, independence and bliss is also satisfied. Therefore, we should change our outlook on life and decide once for all that the aim of life is attainment of Yog and not fulfilment of desires for pleasures. Bodily needs are automatically fulfilled when one strives to achieve Yog.

It is a truth of life that one's aspiration for Truth and Love cannot be fulfilled unless desires are renounced because desires prevent attainment of Yog. Our chief endeavour

should, therefore, be to give up all types of desires and thus attain Yog. By attaining Yog we achieve our real life which is eternal and exists even when the physical bodies disappear. In this life there is everlasting bliss, absolute independence and profound peace because of merging of one's limited self with the Infinite self or God.

To be able to renounce desires it is helpful to keep the following facts in mind :

1. Desires arise only when we identify our self with the body because of ignorance of the fact that we are quite different from our body. The body is made of worldly materials and it has affinity with the world from which it cannot be separated. Like other worldly objects the body is also subject to birth, continuous change and death. In sharp contrast to this, our self is essentially divine and immortal and it has affinity with God.

As long as man considers oneself to be the body or regards the body as one's own, it is not possible to get rid of desire for personal pleasure which is a great obstacle in the attainment of Yog and fulfilment of one's aspiration. Therefore, one should not regard the body as a medium for obtaining pleasure but utilise it for service of the world. Selfless service of others purifies the mind, removes attachment and makes one useful for the world and devoted to duty. It is thus helpful in attainment of Yog.

2. Desires arise because of feeling of some lack or want which one seeks to fulfil with the help of world. It is a fact of life that all desires of anyone are never fulfilled while some desires of everyone are always fulfilled. But even fulfilment of desires does not satisfy anyone for ever. The influence of happiness resulting from fulfilment

of one desire gets stamped in the ego in the form of attachment, because of which fresh desires crop up for repetition of that pleasure and a vicious circle is thus set up. All desires are not fulfilled and so ultimately some desires always remain unfulfilled because of which the individual feels sorry and helpless. Favourable circumstances change, the power to enjoy gets depleted, but there is no end to desires. One cannot therefore rest satisfied unless one renounces desires.

3. One's mental equilibrium gets disturbed as soon as a desire arises and this creates an unnatural tension in the mind. When the desire is fulfilled the tension subsides for a while and one feels happy. Therefore, feeling of happiness is due to relaxation of tension and not to fulfilment of desire. It is not possible to attain Yog as long as the tension of mind continues due to existence of desires.
4. Devotion to duty, realisation of self and awakening of love for God is not possible unless one becomes desireless.
5. It is because of desire for pleasure that one perceives the world and establishes relationship with it in the vain hope of fulfilling one's desires with its help. The world cannot fulfil all of one's desires. In fact, the combined forces of the whole world cannot fulfil the aspiration of even one individual for realisation of eternal life, everlasting peace, complete independence and bliss of love for God, because these things exist within us and not in the world. It is, therefore, best to discard the ignorance-born relationship with the world by renouncing desires.

6. By becoming desireless one becomes free from worries, fears, sorrows and dependence on the world. Divine qualities like peace, independence, fearlessness, even-mindedness and bliss naturally begin to manifest in a desireless individual who becomes satisfied in one's own self.
7. An important truth of life is that essential desires of a desireless individual are fulfilled by law. Thus, one incurs no loss and earns immense benefit by renouncing desires.
8. By desirelessness one achieves purity of mind and Yog, which solves all the problems of life. On attaining Yog there is dawning of knowledge of Truth as well as awakening of love for God.
9. Fulfilment of desires leads to attachment to individuals and objects while non-fulfilment of desires leads to resentment and anger. Because of anger one loses balance of mind and forgets one's duty towards self, the world and God and this leads to ruin. Thus, both fulfilment as well as non-fulfilment of desires hinder spiritual progress.
10. It is a fact of life that everyone is related to each other in some way or the other. A natural corollary of acceptance of this fact will be that one will not harm others and experience compassion at the suffering of others and feel happy on seeing others happy. Compassion helps to eliminate the desire for personal enjoyment while fresh desires do not crop up if one is happy. Both these things thus greatly help us in getting rid of desires for personal happiness.

If one finds it difficult to give up all desires, one may start initially by giving up desires for personal pleasures and fulfil only those desires which are for the welfare of

others provided they are not opposed to one's reason or strength. Ultimately, this will also lead to desirelessness.

In summary it may be stated that by becoming desireless one's connection with the world and its slavery is automatically abolished and union with God is also achieved simultaneously and spontaneously. Desires originate because of ignorance and so they are not fulfilled but renounced, while one's real aspiration for Truth and Love is always fulfilled. Desirelessness leads to union with God. Therefore, the first and the last duty of man is to renounce desires because on doing this the goal of life is automatically achieved and then nothing else remains to be done.



It is not necessary to become the leader or the preceptor of others. The great need of human life is to learn to become one's own leader and preceptor and to build one's moral character.

Sant Vani

VISHRAM

(Effortlessness or True Repose)

THE BACKGROUND FOR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Attraction for the world, quest of truth and craving for Love are integral constituents of man's personality. Attraction for the world is because of ignorance and so it can be conquered, but quest of truth and longing for love are eternal and so the quest is satisfied while love is attained and in this lies the fulfilment of human life. From this point of view the only goal of life is to get rid of ignorance and to become one with Truth and Love.

The existence of desires for enjoyment of pleasure makes it necessary for the individual to exert and take help from others. It is because of this that one becomes a slave of the body and the world. For fulfilment of one's desire for pleasure the individual wants to get something both from the world and its Creator. The great harm that accrues because of this is that it obliges one to suffer the pain of dependence and helplessness, which no one likes. An individual suffering from pain of dependence and lack does not feel satisfied with oneself nor can he be generous for the world or attuned to God. Thus retaining the desire for enjoyment of pleasure is the root cause of all suffering. In sharp contrast to this, elimination of desires for personal pleasure leads to attainment of 'Yog' which is the only basis for all spiritual progress.

It is a fact based on experience that real life is not in enjoyment of pleasure but in attainment of Yog (Union with God) because Yog is possible only with one who is our own and who is present in self all the time, and so is present even now. The one who is our own and is present in our own self, can never be realised by any means requiring effort because it is not possible to make any effort without taking help of non-self. Therefore, Yoga can be achieved only by Vishram (Effortlessness or True repose).

Vishram is an eternal fact of life. All actions originate and end in Vishram. In fact it is not possible to perform action without Vishram. Even in the operation of forces of nature there is provision for vishram or rest before and after commencement of their action. During Vishram one acquires the necessary strength and power for action. There is also dawning of knowledge of Truth (Tatv-bodh) and awakening of love for God during the period of effortlessness or Vishram which thus constitutes the basis for attaining Yog as well as knowledge of Truth and Love for God.

The natural want of man is for a life of independence and power. 'Yog' is the source of all powers. Therefore, the aspiration for achieving real life can be fulfilled only by attaining 'Yog'. It is easy and natural to attain Yog by renouncing desires and becoming effortless. Yog helps in fulfilment of essential and pure desires and in elimination of non-essential and impure desires. In fact, all the basic problems of human life are solved by achieving Yog and thus finding real life within one's own self, after which nothing else remains to be obtained. Love naturally manifests itself in one who does not want anything for oneself.

To become desireless is the principal method for attaining Yog. On becoming desireless one gets automatically detached from what is not eternal and gets attached to the

eternal. A not so well-known fact is that on becoming desireless one acquires great power which can not be got by other means. Desires lead to activities which consume power and ultimately make one powerless, while the power released on becoming desireless makes us one with the source of power responsible for creation of the world. This is the spiritual aspirant's eternal Yog with the Eternal which makes life complete. The freedom to become desireless has been granted to every person. On becoming desireless, the assumed relationships are discarded and unity is established with God, and the goal of life is thus achieved.



Live in the world for the sake of the world only. Desiring the world for oneself takes one away from Truth.

Sant Vani