

# 1

## KEEP YOUR MIND IN GOOD CHEER

Since the mind and the body are interrelated, it is necessary to maintain good physical health for keeping our mind happy and in good cheer. As the saying goes; "a strong mind resides in a strong body". And for maintaining good physical health, it is necessary to have good, pure and wholesome food. If our food is pure, our intellect becomes pure and when our intellect gets purified, it improves our character. When our character becomes lofty, we get great peace of mind. Besides, 'sattvic', i.e., pure, simple and wholesome, food increases our life-span.

For good health, it is essential to avoid worrying too much about our failures in life, because worry first deprives us of our hunger, then sleep and then physical strength. Poor health weakens our body, destroys its beauty, undermines our intellect and, finally, destroys life itself. Therefore, to keep our mind in good cheer, we should give up the habit of worrying too much.

Another way to keep our mind happy is to develop the habit of acquiring the good qualities of others ignoring their bad habits. If we try only to find defects in other people, there will be no dearth of such disqualifications within our own selves. No human being is perfect in all respects. We, therefore, should not look to the shortcomings of others; but try to acquire their virtues.

Finally, to keep our mind in good cheer, good moral character and behaviour are also necessary. One who indulges oneself in vices and villainy can never be peaceful, howsoever learned and knowledgeable one might be. Such a person cannot do self-realisation; and without self-realisation peace of mind will remain a distant dream for him.

In short, to keep our mind delighted and in good cheer, we should keep our body in good shape, acquire good habits from others and engage ourselves in virtuous deeds. This is the key to mental delight which is a pre-requisite for our physical and spiritual development. One should also keep himself busy with his own work continuously to make his mind happy. Only those who are dedicated to hard work can achieve success in life. We should take the cue from the sun and the moon who have been ceaselessly giving light and energy for the past millions and millions of years. Their work never ceases.

## 2

### THINK AND LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

In Vedanta no importance is given to the death of physical body, instead, it is the death of the demoniac king of passions and the senses lurking in the mind which is given importance. This demon in us is never satisfied, not even when the desired object lies secure in its grasp. Like a leaking pot, it craves for more and more and always remains unsatisfied.

It is very important to kill this demon for our salvation, since evil thoughts breed desires, desires create agitations, and agitations express themselves in frantic actions to fulfil desires. Fulfilment of (base) desires gives rise to selfishness; and a selfish man is always restless. He is always agitated. Sometimes he regrets what he has done or failed to do in the past; and the next moment he is worried over the things that he wants to do in the future. Unwittingly, he does not look to the present, which is frittered away in his meaningless wanderings in the past and the future.

But the question is how and with what to kill this demon ? Our scriptures say that it is with the mind

itself that this demon in us can be killed. The mind is nothing but a flow of unconnected, disjointed but consecutive thoughts. We are all thinkers, but our thoughts should be illumined by the Supreme Reality-Parameshwara. So, to kill the demon in mind, we must become introverts and be a witness to whatever occurs in the body, the mind and the intellect. Once we are able to see from where the thoughts arise, we would be able to control them and eliminate the demon of evil lurking within us.

We have to look to the present and act cautiously and discreetly, always treading the path of virtue in life, since that is the only way to reach God. All our actions should be dedicated to Him alone ; for, such actions do not leave their imprints of memories on our mind which tie down an individual to brood, to worry and to agitate. Those who are tied down to past memories and bounded by shackles of time, act with motives to satiate their selfish passions and to fulfil their egocentric desires. And the actions done with selfish ends char the beauty and mar the peace of our own self,

# 3

## MAKE THE EARTH YOUR HEAVEN

The world is passing through traumatic conditions today as mankind is afflicted with many dangerous maladies which have seriously damaged our social fabric. The very foundation of gainful knowledge, mutual love and the will for peaceful coexistence has been badly shaken. Man is vexed and perplexed. In his search for a heaven he is running from place to place; but all in vain; for it always eludes him like a mirage. He does not know that heaven is not outside this world, it is here itself. It requires only some understanding and introspection on his part.

We can have a glimpse of heaven if we make our life glorious by sharing both the happiness and sorrows of others. If every one of us assiduously tries to follow this munificent path we can make this earth itself a heaven.

For the betterment of this world it is necessary that we all should draw pleasure from the happiness of others and share their sorrows and misfortunes offering them required help and assistance in solving their worldly problems. This is the

touchstone of human values in a man. When brute feelings overpower minds and hearts, we unnecessarily burn ourselves with enmity, jealousy and hatred for others. Our mind gets so much perverted that to hurt and to pull others by their legs becomes the sole aim of our life. We do not realise that these base feelings have made this world a veritable hell.

If man could free himself from his base instincts and follow the motto of "service before self", he becomes a real 'devta'. He shares both the happiness and sorrows of his friends, relatives and others treating them as his own. Swami Dayanand Saraswati has, therefore, rightly ordained in the ninth principle of Arya Samaj that "no one should remain content with his or her own wellbeing; on the contrary, everyone should regard his or her well-being in consonance with the well-being of others".

This ideal helps in spreading the feelings of sympathy and brotherhood among people so that everyone in the society gets an opportunity for his or her own development, both spiritual and physical. Differences of caste, creed and colour all vanish from the minds of the people. Such an idealistic atmosphere would really give us the experience of heaven on this very earth.

We all are sons and daughters of the same Supreme Father (Param-Pita Parameshwar). Since our Creator and Sustainer is one and the same, we

are all like brothers and sisters. And, of course, a brother is the one who lives and dies for the sake of his fellowmen.

# 4

## WHAT ARE WE SEARCHING FOR IN LIFE ?

Every man, at all times of the day, longs for something or the other. It can be manifest, like riches and progeny, or unmanifest like name, fame and power. Such things can be numerous; but the ultimate purpose of acquiring these is to get joy and happiness in life. All of us, knowingly or unknowingly, day in and day out are working for this objective. Even great politicians, scientists, industrialists, and artists are engaged in this rat-race to buy joy and happiness from outside, though they may not admit it openly. It is true that a sort of satisfaction which we derive from the fulfilment of our wishes is also a variation of joy and happiness, but it is quite short-lived like a bubble of water. Then, what should we look for in life? We should try to get joy and happiness which is long-lasting, a bliss which is eternal.

We are all constantly searching for this eternal bliss; but still it evades us. Why is it so? The reason is very simple. It is so because in its search we are moving in the wrong direction. How can one



reach Agra from Delhi if one takes the road to Ambala ? If he is sane enough, he would soon realise his mistake, retrace his steps and move towards South. The fountainhead of eternal bliss is hidden in our own hearts, but we are searching for it outside. We can reach it only through self-introspection and selfrealisation. The nectar of self-realisation is so potent that even a drop of it would be enough to destroy all sufferings and sorrows of life and give us joy and peace for all times. But the tragedy is that in our ignorance we consider this peace and joy a commodity which could be bought and brought from outside. We wish to get happiness from our wife, children, property, power, name and fame; and in their pursuit waste a lot of our time, energy and money. Like a musk deer we run from one place to another searching for that fragrance of bliss outside which is hidden in our own hearts. Obviously, such a search is bound to end up in frustration and disappointment.

Then what should we do? Nothing very difficult, of course. Just try to look inwards. Be an introvert and you will find the fountainhead of eternal bliss hidden there itself in your heart.

## VISION OF TRUTH IS VISION OF GOD

This whole universe is moving according to some fixed laws which are eternal and unchangeable. It is a basic truth, and so is God the Almighty, because it is He who forms these laws and is in Himself the embodiment of truth. As such, if man wants to realise God he has to follow the path of truth. This principle has been aptly described by the Upanishads as under:

सत्त्वमेव जयते नानतम् ।

सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानाः ॥

It means, "Truth always triumphs, and not untruth. The pathway of truth leads to the abode of devatas. Truth should, therefore, be the only ETB (Sacred duty) of man. All noble and righteous deeds contain elements of truth in them; whereas in all sinful actions there are always elements of untruth. It can thus be said with conviction that our only dharma is to follow the eternal laws and principles ordained by God in the Vedas. whenever we ignore or overlook these laws we are, likely to commit sins, for we then go astray from the path of

Truth and righteousness. This results in misery and misfortune for us.

When we follow the path of truth, all the forces of the world stand at our back to lend us support and help us in our endeavours. If we follow the path of untruth and commit sins, whether we know it or not, God the Almighty comes on us with a heavy hand. Consequently, sufferings and sorrows come to our lot. Going against truth is like striking our head against the wall. If we could understand this basic fact, we could be sure of developing the will and strength to adhere to truth and keep away from untruth.

Sometimes we do find that in this world untruth triumphs; but that victory of the forces of evil and untruth is only transitional and temporary. It does not last long and is bound to end up in defeat. World history is replete with such instances. Julius Ceasar, Nadirshah, Aurangzeb and others of their ilk established their empires by forces of evil and untruth, murdered their opponents and let loose the reign of tyranny and terror in their empires; but ultimately they had to face defeat at the hands of Providence and leave this world unwept and unsung. Maharana Pratap and Chhatrapati Shivaji did not establish any empires. They underwent sufferings and sorrows, yet people adore them, even today. Why? Because they chose to follow the path of truth and righteousness, come what may.

God is truth and truth is God. Whosoever re and understands this fact actually takes a step direction of God's realisation and helps himself and hi people in crossing the ocean of life. He beco entitled to 'moksha', liberation from the cycle of birth and death and the the pains, sufferings and sorrow One should, at least, recognise truth and try to inculcate in himself its values and virtues. At every step he should take the support of truth. He will have the satisfaction of possessing whatever is worth possession. All noble men (Aryas), therefore, pray to God: "O God! from untruth lead me to truth, so that I could follow the path of virtue and righteousness in my life."

# 6

## THE WAY TO PROSPERITY AND LONG LIFE

Prosperity and long life are the two main objects which every man desires to have for himself. But, everybody cannot have claim on these divine gifts. Only those who follow the path of devatas" which, in other words, means the "path of righteousness', can have access to them. An aspirant may ask, "what is this path of devatas"? The answer is simple. It is the Vedic concept of YANJA which, inter-alia. means renouncing one's own requirements in favour of those whose needs are greater than one's own. The pleasure, the joy and happiness which one gets by such renunciation is much more than the joy of acquiring and amassing worldly assets for oneself

But the path of devatas' is not so easy to follow. It requires a great deal of determination, faith and perseverance on the part of the follower. He has to exercise rigid self-control over his sense-organs, shun all vices and follow the puritan management of life, We, therefore, always pray to God.

O learned men ! We should always hear only do words with our ears, and see only what is pure decent with our eyes. May we attain that age of maturity which is enjoyed by the virtuous through their devotion God and by keeping good physical health.”

If we can develop the habit of hearing only god words and seeing only good objects, it will help us in the development of our character and following the path of righteousness. We should, therefore, scrupulously avoid indulgence in loose and immoral talk. People who are known for backbiting, spreading hatred and enmity in the society and indulging in vulgar talks should never be encouraged to form our company.

Our eyes should be so trained that they see only what is pure, pious and pacific. Obscene pictures, films and other such exhibits should be shunned as they only develop baser passions in man.

The soul (आत्मा) is independent in its actions, which it performs with the help of five senses and five body organs. These are the ten tools of the soul. Its internal force agent is the mind (मन). Listening to dirty talk and seeing passionate scenes create dirty impressions on the mind, which

ultimately gets attached to the soul forming part of its unhealthy 'sanskaras'. A man given to such practices loses spiritual balance. His intellect, vitality, patience and knowledge and all other good values are totally lost. Consequently, his health and fame also desert him. He is hated and humiliated in the society. Contrarily, those who observe self-control, keep the company of wise men, and read religious books, always remain satisfied, healthy, and happily live a long life.

We should, therefore, always pray to God to grant us purity of thought and action in our life so that we may be able to follow the "path of devatas". In this context it would help us to remember Gandhi ji's three monkeys : one closing his eyes with both hands, the second closing his ears and the third one his mouth. The message is very clear. See not what is vile : listen not what is malicious and speak not what may hurt the feelings of others.

Can't we not follow those wise monkeys, if not wise men, for a long, happy and prosperous life?

# 7

## WHY REPENT NOW ?

It is said that man lives in the past, dreams in present and roams in the future, building castles in the air, and that is the root cause of his many failures in life. If, however, he would live in the present, forgetting the past and not caring for the future, he would certainly be better off today and much happier tomorrow.

We could have performed many more honourable deeds yesterday but we failed either because of our ignorance, or for sheer carelessness and antipathy to hard work. But, now the main problem is we are not serious about doing what we should do today, although we have both time and opportunity. For this inaction we will have to repent tomorrow. When we repent for our failures, we feel angry with ourselves and even despise our own person. We can steer clear of this ugly situation, if we are serious about it. First, we should be very clear about the fact that the time which has bygone has gone forever, and it cannot be brought back. The hands of the clock can never be setback. Secondly, we are not sure what will



happen to us tomorrow and what fortunes or misfortunes are in store for us in the days to come. So, we should take care of our today which is with us. when we have the time and opportunity to utilise it to the best of our advantage.

Whatever we did in our young age, when our mind and body were strong enough to undertake hard work, has borne fruit for us today in the shape of progeny, property, friends or even as foes. Reflecting our past life we will find that we missed many opportunities which we could and should have utilised to do righteous acts for the benefit of both our ourselves and the society at large. We now repent for having missed the bus. We did nothing then which could have led us into the realm of God and towards salvation. Most of the precious time we wasted in the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

Let bygone be begone. It is no use crying over the spilt milk. We should take care of our today, so that we may not have to repent again tomorrow. We should forget the past, for what has been done cannot be undone. We should purify our sense organs, so that our heart and mind could follow the path of righteousness; and also make our intellect stable and judicious with full faith in God. If we do so, our sense attributes will be controlled and we will be able to follow the pathway to salvation without having to repent at the time of departure from this world.

# 8

## HOW TO GET RID OF FEAR

When a man gets rid of his desires he becomes fearless; for fear and desire go together. When our desires are fulfilled we feel extremely happy. But this happiness is not even a fraction of the bliss that a person, who has cast off his desires, can enjoy. Therefore, it is highly desirable to suppress our desires.

In this context a pertinent question often asked by people is : Can one give up his desires completely ? The answer is in the negative. Then what should we do to get rid of our desires ? The solution is very simple. If one is not able to eschew desires, one should at least direct them towards such noble objects as may be helpful in one's salvation. Our scriptures do not say that all desires have to be curbed. Such desires as are based on Dharma can be entertained. "Let me always think of God and make my life purposeful for myself, my family, society and country", are good desires and should be encouraged and favoured as they are harmless.

We all know that when a certain desire is fulfilled, another crops up. This is a never-ending process. Human desires are unlimited and we can never be satisfied by yielding to them. We should, therefore, train ourselves to turn away from desires by longing to fulfil the purpose of our life, namely uniting with God. If we don't kill our desires (of course, the bad ones), our desires will kill us. Sant Kabir has aptly expressed this idea in the following verse:

माया मरी न मन मरा, मर मर गया शरीर ।

तृष्णा तुझको ले मरी, कह गए दास कबीर ॥

Our lives will be purposeful and peaceful only if harmful desires are eliminated. Once they are eliminated, all our fears will automatically vanish.

## LIGHT IS LIFE-SHARE IT WITH OTHERS

Light is life because without light nothing can survive. This light is VIDYA (knowledge) which expels the darkness of ignorance (AVIDYA). As life cannot survive without light, so also human society cannot survive without the light of gainful knowledge (Vidya).

The source of light that we get on earth is the sun, and the sun in its turn gets it from the self-refulgent God, who is the eternal store-house of light. The sun does not keep that light confined to itself, but passes it on to all the members of its cosmic family since they also need it for their survival. Like the sun, Agni (fire) also gives us light, and energy also, which is necessary for our survival. It helps us in keeping our environment pure by burning the impurities of objects that we need for our life. Can we not draw a lesson from such benevolence of the Sun and the Agni?

We all know that fire begets fire. Nothing can be drawn from nothing. There has to be something to draw something out of it. Therefore, if we want to give light of life to others, we have first to obtain it

from the Omniscient God. One who himself is hungry cannot feed others. Unless we ourselves have knowledge of the Vedas and other scriptures we cannot pass on their message to others. Only an enlightened person can give light to others. However, care has to be taken that while imparting knowledge to others one should be absolutely free from ego, anger, and greed; and should be polite in one's talk, free from self-praise or sense of pride. An ideal preacher, who has gained knowledge and power of good speech by the grace of God, should pass that on to his disciples without aspiring for any material reward in return. He should pass on that light of knowledge (Vidya) to others like a selfless lamp. For that he does not have to make any special efforts. His mental attitude and way of life will speak for themselves. His words will carry conviction with his audience.

If you are a preacher or a teacher, first enlighten yourself with divine knowledge and then share it with others for their benefit, always remembering the important directive given by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, "No one should be contented with his own progress only but should regard the progress of others as his own."

## WHERE TO FIND HAPPINESS?

Normally happiness, peace and enjoyment are considered to be synonymous; but, in fact, they have different connotations. Enjoyment is related to the body, peace to the mind and happiness to the soul. The soul experiences happiness only when it succeeds in its communion with God. Man tries in vain to search for happiness outside though, verily, it is always available within his ownself. However, one has to make efforts to reach to that nectar of eternal bliss by following the path of righteousness (DHARMA) and controlling the vagaries of the mind and the heart. It is only when we like a tortoise, withdraw our sense organs inside and close all the doors to stop outside disturbances reaching our mind that we can have the vision of God ('Hari Darshan') in the recesses of our heart.

Withdrawal of the sense organs inside does not mean that we physically close our eyes, ears and mouth. It only implies that we see also what is worth seeing, listen to what is worth listening and speak what is worth utterance. Such a control over our sense organs will certainly help us in

introspection which opens the way to the realisation of God.

People who suffer from ego and self-delusion, whose actions are pretentious and who talk very highly about themselves, can never reach the vicinity of God. But those who follow the path of Truth continue to march forward towards their goal.

It is a sin to indulge in self-praise, or be eager to listen our praise by others, as all such commendations neutralise the fruits of the good deeds done by us.

Indulging in, or listening to self-praise, makes a man proud and arrogant. Arrogance wipes out the real value of good actions and all such actions done by man become in effect non-actions, i.e., actions not done. One should, therefore, save oneself from arrogance for which one should act in such a way that one's left hand does not know what one's right hand is doing.

Commendation reduces a man's stature and even a devout may become shallow and selfish. He starts finding fault with others and his selfishness pushes him away from the path of righteousness into the blind alley of vice and misery. A selfish man takes recourse to fraud and deceit. It is a bad quality, a disease of the soul which should be scrupulously shunned.

Purity of heart is essential for the realisation of God, for only when the heart is pure the conscience

is lightened by the vision of God, Thoughts of greed and lust spoil the heart and obstruct the vision of God. One should be honest in one's work, free from greed, anger, deceit and passions. Only then can one follow the path of Truth and righteousness.

And, only the path of righteousness can lead us to the realisation of God. Once we enter His domain we will find long lasting peace and our soul will enjoy eternal bliss.