

PHILOSOPHICAL STORIES



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Abstract principles and subtle truths are not easily grasped and retained by the mind. Mere statement of philosophical theory appears dry and difficult to understand. They have therefore to be presented in readily acceptable and pleasing form. As isolated aphorisms and authoritative assertions they fall flat upon you whereas, if given in the setting of everyday life, the same truths, appeal at once to the imagination. Thus from the very earliest times Verities of Life have been conveyed to the layman through allegorical tales, interesting anecdotes and instructive parables.

The human mind has an instinctive relish for stories. Philosophical truths brought out through interesting incidents and amusing situations appeal to everyone and are not easily forgotten. This little volume contains numerous lofty truths, choice Upadesh couched in story form at once interesting and highly illuminating. More than forty such 'Philosophical Stories' from the pen of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj have been collected in the present volume and form an extremely valuable means of learning precious lessons of life, ethical, religious and spiritual. They serve to guide, enlighten and inspire. Their

unique garb makes possible the presentation of the Truths contained therein to young and old, women and children alike as well as to the totally unlettered even. Thus they effectively facilitate widest and the most thorough dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

The stories are all of them didactic in their purpose and numerous hidden gems of truths are embodied in them. It is hoped that this new edition of this work would prove very useful to a large section of the readers who seek to have spiritual instruction in simple form.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

(FOR THE THIRD EDITION)

Sri Swami Sivananda, in his great love and compassion, left no stone unturned in order to wake up slumbering mankind. In his own time he did it through personal contact or letters, by teaching, by giving, through love and through humour. However, for those who would come after his Mahasamadhi he did it by writing books on the highest philosophical topics like the Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahmasutras. But he also wrote his wisdom in stories, plays and poems: they appeal to the heart, and the truth contained therein inspires instantly and spontaneously.

This little book, 'Philosophical Stories', saw the light of day in 1939 and had its second edition in 1945. Now after 68 years the third edition is appearing for the joy, reflection and benefit of all of us.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

BRAHMAN

You dream sometimes that you are dead and that your relatives are weeping. Even in that supposed death state, you see and hear them weeping. This clearly indicates that even after apparent death, life really persists. You exist even after the physical sheath is thrown out. That existence is Atma or the big I.

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II—4, 13, you will find: "Then by what should he see whom?" This clearly indicates that Atman is not an object of perception. It is always the knowing subject. There is neither an agent nor an object of action, nor an instrument. In the physical plane only there is the Triputi or the triad, viz., seer, sight and seen. Who can know the knower? How should one know him by whom He knows all this? You could not see the seer of sight; you could not hear the hearer of the hearing; you could not perceive the perceiver of perception; you could not know the knower of knowledge."

Whatever you see is Bhava Padartha. Padartha means a thing. That which exists is Bhava. When you say: "It is very very big. It is very very sweet. London is a very very big city," this

“very” indicates “Abhava Padartha.” It cannot be conceived even by the mind. Brahman or the Absolute comes under the category of “Abhava Padartha” because it is infinite.

All differences are due to Upadhis or limiting adjuncts. As the limiting adjuncts are illusory or else, the differences caused by them are also false. Therefore Brahman alone who is one without a second is the balance left behind. He alone exists in the three periods of time.

You will realise that the Lord whom in ignorance you worship as separate from yourself is not far from you, is not dwelling outside. He is the Self or Atma residing in the chambers of your heart. He is the Inner Ruler.

Call it by whatever name you like, rest or peace, perfection or freedom, fullness or life or Nirvana, Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Sahaja Avastha, Kaivalya or Moksha, towards it you strive in all activities unconsciously as these transient, mundane objects do not give you full satisfaction. Every movement of the foot is towards Sat Chit Ananda Brahman. Even a rogue or a vagabond is marching towards that immortal city of Brahman though he is in a circuitous or zigzag path.

MAYA AND AVIDYA

Just as the mirror is rendered dim by a layer of dirt attaching to it so also knowledge is veiled by Avidya. Therefore all people are deluded. They cling to things unreal and mistake the body for the

pure Atma. They think that this illusory world of names and forms is quite real.

Mula-Prakriti is the slumbering or latent state of the Universe, called also Maha-Sushupti when the Gunas are in a state of equilibrium. When the Gunas are disturbed, Mula-Prakriti is called by the different names of Maya, Avidya, Tamas, etc. Brahman is beginningless and endless. Maya is beginningless but she has an end. She vanishes as soon as one gets the knowledge of the Self.

VAIRAGYA

Why do you laugh in vain, friend, when you have just cause really to weep? You have wasted this life in foolish mirth and carnal pleasures. You have done various sinful acts. You have not done anything to improve your nature. You have no clear-conscience. Your heart is filled with all sorts of impurities. You have no peace of mind. Remember that all carnal pleasures will bite and sting you to death in the end.

In the Gita (Chap. XVIII-38), you will find: "The pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense organ with the object is at first like nectar but in the end is like poison." Open your eyes now. Do virtuous actions. Seek the company of the wise. Remember Him. Practise meditation. You will have a new glorious life.

Vairagya is purely an internal mental state. A man may remain in the world amidst luxuries,

woman and riches and yet may possess perfect Vairagya; while a Sadhu who remains in a cave in Himalayas may be attached to his Kamandal, stick or a piece of cloth. Raja Janaka was a perfect dispassionate man though he ruled a kingdom. So was Raja Bhagiratha too. Queen Chudalai possessed perfect Vairagya though she ruled a dominion, while her husband who retired into the forest was intensely attached to his body and Kamandal. You cannot form a correct opinion of any Sannyasin or a householder as to his state of Vairagya or mental condition by a casual talk with him for a few hours of staying with him for a few days. You will have to live with him for a very long time and study his internal attitude. Generally people make serious mistakes. They are deluded by external appearances. They take a physically nude Sadhu for a great Mahatma in the beginning. Later on they have to change their impression after close contact. Physical nudity alone will not constitute real Vairagya. What is wanted is mental nudity i.e. complete eradication of Vasanas, Egoism, etc. Do not be deceived by external appearances. Beware.

CONTROL THE MIND

If you take pure food you will have a pure mind. Mind is formed out of the subtlest essence of food. If you have purity of mind, you will remember God or Atma. If you always remember Atma, the knots of the heart, viz, Avidya, Kama,

Karma (ignorance, desire, and action) will be rent asunder. You will attain Moksha.

That form which the infinite, all-pervading Atma has assumed through its power of imagination is called mind. Mind creates and destroys. It creates the whole Universe by its power of imagination. It is the creator and enjoyer of all happiness and miseries. It is the cause for bondage and liberation. Mind is all. It is everything. It is your true friend and bad enemy. The lower mind is your enemy. It causes various attachments. It is filled with various base desires and appetites. The highest mind is a rare friend and benefactor because it imparts true counsels in the way of obtaining the supreme goal of life. The higher mind becomes your guiding Guru. Hear its sweet, small voice and follow its instructions. The voice of the pure mind is the voice of God. It is an infallible voice. In Gita you will, find: "A man should uplift himself by his own self, so let him not weaken this Self for this self is the friend of oneself, and this Self is the enemy of oneself. The Self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the self. But to the unconquered Self the self is inimical (and behaves) like an external foe." (Chap.VI-5-6.). There is no other vessel on this earth to wade the ocean of the lower instinctive mind.

Your character depends upon the quality of thoughts held in your mind and the mental pictures and ideals entertained by you. If your thoughts are of a base nature, you will have a bad

character. If you entertain noble thoughts, sublime ideals and holy pictures, you will be a centre of joy, power and peace. If you develop the practice of cultivating sublime divine thoughts, all base thoughts will perish by themselves gradually. Just as darkness cannot stand before the sun, so also, evil thoughts cannot stand before sublime thoughts.

PRELIMINARY SADHANA

Try to know the ways and habits of this Ahamkar. It thirsts for self-aggrandisement or self-advancement, power, possession of objects and enjoyment. Kill this Ahamkar or egoism and selfishness. Be disinterested. Pin your faith to the opposite virtues, spirit of sacrifice and service as the guiding principles of life. At once you will have a rich, expanded spiritual life.

Kindle the powers of resistance. Keep up the positive ideal of active service of humanity and pure love. Generate the positive Sattwic counter-currents of energy to combat the downward negative currents of Vasanas. Keep yourself always in a positive state. Overcome negative thoughts by entertaining positive divine thoughts. Rise from impurity, impotence and faintness of heart. Be bold, be cheerful always. Cultivate Daivi Sampat, such as mercy, peace, forgiveness, tolerance, etc. Destroy Asuric Sampat, such as arrogance, egoism, pride, anger, lust, etc. You are bound to attain the highest bliss and knowledge.

O Aspirants! Take refuge in your own self, the immortal soul. Be steadfast in your resolve. Tread the path of truth and righteousness. Watch your mind very carefully. Be vigilant and diligent. Discipline the turbulent Indriyas. Curb this tongue and reproductive organ. You will cross the ocean of Samsara and will attain Immortality and perennial Peace and Joy.

PRACTISE MEDITATION

Neophytes should remember again and again some important Vedantic texts daily. Then only his doubts will be removed. Then only he will be established in the path. These texts are: "Being only was in the beginning, one without a second" (Chandogya Upanishad VI-2-1.) "In the beginning all this was one Self only" (Aitareya Upanishad VI-2-1.) "This is the Brahman, without cause and without effect; this Self is Brahman perceiving everything." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II-5-19)

Concern yourself with the present only. Do not look back upon the past nor to the future. Then alone you will be really happy. You will be free from cares, worries and anxieties. You will have a long life. Destroy the Sankalpas through strenuous efforts. Meditate ceaselessly upon that Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman and attain that supreme immaculate seat. May you prosper gloriously! May you live drowned in the ocean of Brahmic bliss in an illumined state!

This Immortal Atman cannot be attained without constant practice. Therefore he who

wishes to attain Immortality and freedom should meditate on the Self or Brahman for a long time.

The real solitary place is Brahman who is one without a second. There is neither sound nor colour here. There is no disturbance of any sort here. The only companion for you in the beginning of your practice is Brahman. When you become that during deep meditation you are left alone (*Siva Kevaloham*).

Atma is the fountain source of energy. Thinking on Atma or the source for energy also is a dynamic method for augmenting energy, strength and power.

If you once think even for a second of the all-pervading, pure, immortal Satchitananda Atman or Brahman, this tantamount to taking thousand and eight dips in the sacred Triveni—the junction of holy rivers at Prayag. This is the real mental sacred bath. Physical bath is nothing when compared to this internal bath of wisdom or knowledge.

Worship God or Atma with the flowers of Jnana, contentment, peace, joy and equal vision. This will constitute real worship. Offerings of rose, jasmine, sandal paste, incense, sweetmeats and fruits are nothing when compared to the offerings of Jnana, contentment, etc. These are the offerings given by ignorant persons.

Try to identify yourself with the eternal, immortal, ever pure Atma or soul that resides in the chambers of your heart. Think and feel

always: "I am the pure Atma." This one thought will remove all troubles and fanciful thoughts. The mind wants to delude you. Start this anti-current of thought. The mind will lurk like a thief. Be careful.

REMOVE THE OBSTACLES

If you strain yourself in meditation and go beyond your capacity, laziness and inactive nature will supervene. Meditation should come naturally on account of the mind induced by the practice of Sama, Dama, Uparati and Pratyahara.

When you practise Samadhi, many obstacles such as sleep, laziness, break of continuity, confusion, temptation, infatuation, and desire for worldly pleasure and a feeling of blankness will assail you. You must be on the alert. You must be vigilant and circumspective. You will have to get over these impediments step by step through patient dauntless efforts. You will have to cross this void also. What appears to you as a void when all the Vrittis have perished is not really a void. This is Ayvaktam. If you cross this void also you will rest in your own Self. Terrible fear will try to overpower you when you come face to face with the void because you are left alone now. You have nothing to see, nothing to hear. There is none to cheer you. You will have to depend on your own Self. Presence of mind is needed now at this critical juncture. Draw courage and strength from within. Sage Uddalaka also encountered much difficulty in crossing this void. No impediment can

stand before a man of fiery determination and iron will.

Some aspirants stop their Sadhana after reaching Avyaktam. They get false contentment. They have wrong imagination that they have reached the highest goal. This is a sad mistake. They get themselves merged in Avyaktam and become Prakritilayas. Prakritilayas are born again in this world with powers. You should try to go beyond this Avyaktam or the unmanifested Prakriti. Then you will reach the Bhuma or the unconditioned Brahman.

The Vasanas are very powerful. The senses and mind are very turbulent and impetuous. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. That is the reason why the spiritual path is called the razor path in Katha Upanishad. There is no difficulty for a man of strong determination and iron will even in the razor path. Strength comes from within at every step.

Extreme ascetism and self torture are not necessary for the attainment of knowledge of the Self. You will have to adopt always the middle course. Too much fasting brings weakness and retards vigorous spiritual Sadhana. You can have occasionally mild fasts. Live on milk and fruits on Sundays and Ekadasi.

Ethical culture is of paramount importance. The curiosity for acquiring Siddhis must be abandoned. That man who thirsts for Siddhis is still within the dominion of Maya. Only when this

thirsting dies, the student enters the borderland of Jnana or the spiritual kingdom. Every student should maintain daily spiritual diary. Then only defects can be rectified and the mind can be controlled. The spirit of service of humanity must be ingrained in the heart of every aspirant. Sattwic virtues such as mercy, generosity, tolerance, forgiveness and nobility must be developed to a high degree. Teachers of Yoga and sages lay great emphasis on the above points.

Do not become despondent under any account. Walk like a spiritual lion. Overcome difficulties one by one. Be not afraid of public criticisms. People are still abusing Lord Mahadeva, Sri Sankaracharya, Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. They will continue to do so from eternity to eternity. The world abounds with Tamasic people. Sattwic people are very rare. Discipline your mind. Stand adamant under all conditions and at all times. Keep a cool balanced mind. This is highest Jnana. Now stand up. Gird up your loins and fight with the Indriyas and mind. Serve the world with redoubled force and energy. May you prosper gloriously! May you attain the state of Kaivalya!

When the mind is Sattwic you will get glimpses, flashes of intuition. You will compose poems. You will understand the significance of the Upanishads beautifully. But this stage will not last long in neophytes. Tamas and Rajas will try to enter the mental factory. In the beginning, the stage of progress may be like the frog's, never

steady and continuous. You may think that you have almost reached the goal and experience for the next 16 or 20 days nothing but disappointment. It will be a jump from position to position but not a continuous development. Have sustained, intense Vairagya and do intense protracted Sadhana. Be under the guidance and close contact of your Guru for some years. You will have steady and continuous progress.

O Ram! Thou art Satyakama, a lover of truth. Thou art very dear to me, because thou art treading, the path of truth or the path of self-realisation though with faltering steps. You are bound to succeed. All obstacles will vanish like mist before the sun. Be not troubled. Be not anxious if there is a little delay in the descent of the Divine Light. March boldly in the spiritual path.

O Beloved Ram! You are within a strong spiritual fortress now. You are absolutely safe. You can do vigorous Sadhana now without fear. You have a strong spiritual prop to lean upon. Become a brave soldier. Kill your foe, the mind, ruthlessly. Wear the spiritual laurels of peace, equal vision and contentment. You are already shining with Brahmic splendour on your face. The All-merciful Lord has given you all sorts of comforts, good health and a Guru to guide you. What more do you want? Grow, evolve, realise the truth and proclaim it everywhere.

GET EXPERIENCES

Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes the man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you are nearing the goal. You will experience a wonderful calm now. Drink the nectar in the deep silence. In the profound silence the mysterious Atma will be revealed unto you like an Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects Moha, fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will be light, knowledge, purity and bliss only everywhere.

Some experience glimpses of the transcendent wonders of Atma. Some are on the borderland of the vast dominion of Atma. Some like Dattatreya, Jada Bharata, Vama Deva and Sadasiva Brahman had plunged deep in the ocean of bliss. The more the thinning of the Vasanas, egoism and Moha, Adhyasa, the greater the Bliss of the Self. The more the Sadhana, the more the experience of joy of the Soul.

BECOME A JIVANMUKTA

Not through matted locks, not through fiery lectures and erudition, not through the exhibition of miracles, does one attain perfection or knowledge of the Self. He in whom the two currents, Raga, Dwesha, egoism, lust and anger are destroyed *in toto* is ever happy and he is Brahman or liberated sage or Jivanmukta.

If the Vasanas and attachment to the objects to the world vanish entirely and if you are in that immovable state, you have become a Jivanmukta. You will abide in your own Self. You will rest in the non-dual Supreme seat. The Jnana vision will arise in you. The light of wisdom will shine unobscured like the sun in the absence of clouds. You will never be attracted to any worldly objects. You will be absolutely free from delusion and sorrow. You will actually feel that Self alone pervades and permeates everywhere in this world. You will shine with Brahmic effulgence. You will possess equal vision and a balanced mind. You will be free from longing for sensual objects because the mind will always be made cool with Brahmic Bliss. You will be bathed in the cool ambrosial nectar that dribbles from a contented and quiescent mind.

Try to enjoy that sleepless sleep wherein all the senses and the mind remain in a state of quietitude and the intellect ceases functioning. This sleepless sleep is Maha-nidra or superconscious state. It is perfect awareness wherein the individual soul has merged itself into the supreme soul. There is no waking from this sleep. This show of names and forms eventually vanishes.

CONTENTS

PART I

1. Pundit Krishna Shastri.	27
2. Rishi Narada.	29
3. A Hunter.	33
4. Blind Followers	37
5. Lord Krishna and Sudama	38
6. The Rich and the Poor	40
7. The wise Lady	41
8. Lord Gouranga and a Leper	43
9. Guru Bhakti	44
10. The Action of Yama	49
11. Saint Tukaram.	53
12. Honesty of a Fruit seller	54
13. Kallu Ram	57
14. Chokhamela	58
15. Prince Narendra	60
16. A Village Munsiff.	62
17. King Yudhishtira.	64
18. Moha or Infatuated Love	65

PART II

1. Lakshmi and Saraswati	67
2. Maya's Son	70
3. A Kaviraj and His Son	76
4. Poor Knowledge	80
5. A Practical Vedantin	83
6. Raghavan and His Wife	86
7. A Sannyasin	88
8. A Son-in law	90
9. Two Young Yogis	92
10. Ekanath	94

PART III

1. Princess Vidyavati	96
2. Conference of Mosquitoes	102
3. A Cobbler Saint	107
4. Jabala Rishi	111
5. A Shameless Man	113
6. The Youngman and the Pundit	115
7. Sulochana	117
8. A Shopkeeper	120
9. Lord Buddha	122
10. Two Nambudiris	124

11. Jiva and Karmas.	125
12. Karmas and Dreams	129
13. Benjamin Franklin.	130
14. Story of Kali	133

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PART I

1. PUNDIT KRISHNA SHASTRI

Pundit Krishna Shastri, a native of Tanjore, was a sincere spiritual aspirant. He had great devotion to Lord Siva. He longed for initiation from an Anubhava Jnani into the mysteries of Kaivalya. Once he heard of Swami Shuddhananda Bharati of Nasik, a great Mahatma, well versed in all the Shastras and who did vigorous Tapas for a long period. Hearing his greatness Pundit Krishna Shastri decided to go to Nasik to take initiation from Swami Shuddhananda Bharati. Accordingly the Shastri walked on foot to Nasik and reached the abode of Sri Swamiji and prostrating before him addressed him thus: "O Revered Swamiji! I have come all this distance from my native place in search of you. I have taken you as my Guru hearing about your greatness. Pray, give me initiation and Mantra for Japa. I am tormented by worldly ties. I have determined to lead the life of an ascetic. Pray, be merciful to me." Swami Shuddhananda Bharati could read the mind of his would be student. He found him to be a fit person to tread the spiritual path and spoke to

him: "I am very much delighted to find that you are an earnest seeker after God. You have got faith and devotion. Do Japa of the Mantra of .Lord Siva,"Om Namah Sivaya." You will get Mukti. Forget all about the world and your previous connections with family and children and take to vigorous Japa of this Mantra. You are sure to have Darshan of Lord Siva."

Pundit Krishna Shastri began Japa of the Guru Mantra in right earnest. Though he had a desire for liberation, he had attachment for his only son and the house he lived in. He had no other attraction but he was sorely affected by these attachments. He did Japa for 3 months. One day he received information, that he lost his only son and further that his house was burnt down to ashes by some mischief-makers. Pundit Krishna Shastri's sorrow knew no bounds. He burst into tears and appealed to the Lord saying, "O Lord, though I praise you from the bottom of my heart and long for liberation, yet I am worried by heavy sorrow on account of the death of my only son. My house has been burnt to ashes. Is this justice? Is this the fruit of my Japa?" The very night Lord Siva appeared in his dream and said, "I have done a good thing for you. You had great Moha for your son and house. I have destroyed these two pleasure centres—son and house. You can concentrate your mind on Me now quite easily and steadily as you have no attachment. Do not lose

your strength of mind. Be regular and steady in your Japa and meditation. You will have Mukti soon. Thou art dear to me." Now Pundit Krishna Shastri gave his full mind to Lord Siva and attained Moksha.

Aspirants should not be afraid of difficulties and troubles. They must have courage, patience, perseverance and strength of mind. That is why Srutis emphatically declare: "This Atma cannot be obtained by a weak man." Troubles and difficulties are blessings in disguise.

2. RISHI NARADA

Once, Narada the foremost of Lord Vishnu's devotees met Sri Krishna at Dwaraka. The Lord gave Narada a warm welcome by offering Arghya and Padya and made him sit on his throne. Lord Krishna then questioned Narada about the welfare of the people over the three worlds because Narada travelled all the three worlds singing the names of the Lord.

In the midst of giving out his experience and other information relevant to the Lord's questions, Narada said as follows: "My dear Lord, I have heard many a time especially through you about the glory of Satsanga and that it is a primary requisite for a man for evolution. You have narrated the stories of Dhruva, Prahlada, Shibi, Bali, Uddhava and others. May you be so kind as

to enlighten me on this point for my personal satisfaction.”

To this the Lord replied thus: “Yes, Narada, without Satsanga I have not seen or heard of one who has attained Me. You are quite fit to know this, because through you it spreads in the three worlds. I will show the benefit of Satsanga at present. Four miles from this place there stands a banyan tree on which you will observe a squirrel nibbling and jumping about merrily. It would not mix with others of its ilk. It will be aloof. At once proceed to that place and ask the squirrel the benefits of Satsanga, and note what it says.”

Accordingly Narada started on his journey wondering all along how a squirrel could give the benefits of Satsanga. He soon reached the spot and found the particular squirrel as instructed by the Lord. Now Narada questioned the squirrel thus: “May I know, dear squirrel friend, the benefits of Satsanga. Sri Krishna has sent me here to know it from you.” Oh! To the surprise of Narada the squirrel fell down dead immediately. Narada was pained at heart for seeing the squirrel in this condition quite contrary to his expectations. He returned to Sri Krishna at Dwaraka and narrated to him what had happened and expressed his grief at this strange incident and begged for mercy.

Sri Krishna addressing Narada said thus: "O my dear Narada, be not troubled. Do not be afraid of any sin for the death of the squirrel. Proceed further four miles from the banyan tree where stands a beautiful garden decorated with beautiful flowers and fruits of different varieties. In that garden there is a mango tree and on it is hung in a cage a beautiful parrot with seven different colours. If you ask that parrot it will narrate to you the effects of Satsanga." Narada proceeded again to the place now directed by the Lord and found the cage hung on the mango tree and a beautiful parrot inside. He made himself bold to ask the parrot as directed but no sooner the question was put to the bird than it fell down senseless and was dead. Narada was again disappointed and hurried to the Lord to give the information. This time Narada was a little agitated in mind but at the same time thought that it must be some Lila (play) of the Lord. Now Lord Krishna told Narada: "O my dear Narada, I am sorry you have been disappointed twice, but this time you shall surely succeed in your attempt. I assure you that you will not be disappointed any more. At Ayodhya there rules a virtuous king, a descendent of the Raghu family, loving his subjects as his own children. To him a child is born today. If you ask that new born child the benefits of Satsanga, you will surely get a reply." This time Narada was more troubled at heart for, if it so happened that the

child also dies at his sight, his plight would be damaging and it may cost his life. However, the Lord's wish should be carried out, and so he proceeded at once to Ayodhya. He straightaway went to the king's palace and gave word of his intention to see the new born child of the king. The king was very much pleased and welcomed Sage Narada and considered himself most fortunate to have seen such a great sage on the happy occasion of his son's birth. The king gave a kind reception to Narada and asked the intention of his sudden visit to his country. Narada said: 'O King! I am very much pleased with your love and devotion. I want to ask your new born baby a question which he alone is capable of answering.' Immediately the king ordered for the child and the mother herself brought the child in her arms and placed it before the sage. The child was smiling and Narada said thus: "Dear child, can you tell me the benefits of Satsanga." To the surprise of all, the child stood up and said thus: "O Sage! How lucky I am! This is the effect of Satsanga. When I was in that banyan tree, thy Darshan alone gave a better birth to that of a parrot and again you have been kind enough to give Darshan to that parrot also. As a result of your kindness, now I have got the birth of a human being and that too as the son of a great king and I am sure by thy grace I shall attain the end and aim of my life—the holy communion with that Lord Almighty of

Vaikuntha.” Hearing these words Narada was very much pleased and blessed the child and went to Sri Krishna and fell prostrate before the Lord and said, “O Lord, wonderful are thy ways. I was foolish to doubt as to what would happen. Pray excuse for my folly. I have now known the benefits of Satsanga. Hail Hail! O Lord, of the three worlds!” Singing the names of the Lord the Sage Narada departed.

3 A HUNTER

Once, Rishi Narada was passing along a forest. He saw a deer in a dying condition. One of its legs was broken and pierced through with an arrow. He walked a few paces and found a hog and a hare in a similar condition. He was very much moved. He saw a hunter lying in a bush behind a tree with his bow-string drawn to shoot a deer. Narada went to him straight. The attention of the hunter was diverted and so the deer escaped. The hunter grew angry and abused Narada. The hunter asked: “O Saint! Why hast thou come to me? The deer aimed at by me has fled on account of your coming. Narada replied: “I have lost my way. I want to ask you one thing. If you shoot animals, why do you leave them half-dead? Why do you not kill them outright? The half-dead animals suffer considerably.” The hunter replied: “The sufferings of the half-dead animals give me great pleasure.” The hunter said: “O Sage, Come

to my hut. I will give you deer skin or tiger skin.” Narada replied: “I do not want any kind of skin. Give me a definite promise that whatever animal you kill from tomorrow, you will kill it out-right, and not leave it half-dead.” The hunter said: “O Rishi! What a funny boon you ask! Please tell me, what is the harm in leaving an animal half-dead?” Narada replied: “The wounded animals feel considerable pain. You commit a great sin. All these animals which you have tortured to death will in future births retaliate by killing you in a similar manner. Action will surely produce reaction. The law of Karma is inexorable and unrelenting.” On hearing these words of wisdom from the mouth of Narada the hunter began to feel very much. His heart was filled with fear and remorse. He repented very much for his evil actions. He shed profuse tears and fell at the feet of Narada and accosted him thus: “O Rishi! I am a wretched sinner. This is my profession from my very boyhood. Save me now. O Lord! Save me. Thou art my sole refuge.” Narada said: “I can save you if you follow my advice implicitly.” The hunter replied: “O Revered Rishi! I shall carry out your behests to the very letter and spirit. I promise thee, my Lord, I am suppliant to thee.” Narada said: “O hunter! Break the bow at once.” The hunter said: “How can I live now?” Narada replied: “I shall give you food daily. Be not anxious, my child.”

The hunter broke his bow immediately. Narada said to the hunter: "Go to your house straightaway and distribute your wealth to poor people. Build a small hut on the banks of Ganges in a village. Sing constantly Lord Krishna's name. Sing always, 'Om Sri Krishna Govinda Hare Murare, He Natha Narayana Vasudeva.' I shall send you enough food daily. I give you now the name Krishna Das." The hunter strictly followed the instructions of Narada.

The villagers came to know that a good saint was living on the banks of Ganges. Ten or fifteen people brought food daily for the new saint. The hunter-saint accepted as much as was sufficient for him. He spent twelve years in singing constantly Lord Krishna's name with great faith and earnestness. He became a sincere devotee. He had a soft compassionate pure heart.

One day Narada said to Rishi Parbata: "Let us go and see a disciple of mine." The two Rishis came to the hut of Krishna Das. Krishna Das brushed the ants with his cloth from the place where he was going to do prostration and then prostrated at their holy feet. Then Krishna Das seated them on mattresses of Kusha grass, washed their feet with the water and drank the Charanamrita and sprinkled a small quantity of water on his head. Then he did Kirtan and sang the names of Lord Krishna. He danced with

uplifted hands in rapturous ecstasy and shed profuse tears. He lost his body consciousness and entered into Bhava Samadhi for six hours. Then he came to physical consciousness. Parbata Rishi and Rishi Narada were very much delighted to behold the exalted condition of Krishna Das. Narada then asked Krishna Das: "Are you getting your food daily?" Krishna Das answered: "Whomsoever you send brings me food." Then both the Rishis blessed Krishna Das and departed.

The cruel hunter was transmuted into a compassionate saint by the grace of Narada.

Rishis and saints are like a philosopher's stone. They are even better than a philosopher's stone. The philosopher's stone can change iron into gold but cannot make the iron into a philosopher's stone, whereas a saint can change even a worst sinner as a saint. The glory of Satsanga cannot be adequately described in words. Even a moment's company with saints or sages has incalculable benefits. Even a moment's Satsanga with Mahatmas will overhaul the vicious Samskaras and worldly nature of worldly-minded people. There is no boat more safe than Satsanga to cross the ocean Of Samsara. Neophytes should remain in the company of their Gurus till they are perfectly moulded and established in deep meditation.

4. BLIND FOLLOWERS

In Rameshwaram there lived some fifty years ago a great Sanskrit scholar by name Ramaswamy Shastry. He was endowed with erudition, argumentative skill and intellectual virility. He could conduct religious discourses, Kathas and classes in a masterly manner. So he attracted a large number of people from the neighbouring districts. He had countless admirers, devotees and disciples.

On one new moon day Ramaswamy Shastry went to take bath in the sea. His devotees also followed him. Thousands were taking bath in the sea. Ramaswamy Shastry had a long brass vessel for carrying water for purposes of ablution. Before taking bath, he dug a small pit, put the vessel in the pit and covered it over with a heap of sand like a Linga. Then he took bath. His object in covering the vessel with sand was that he could easily find it out. He thought that the heap of sand would serve as a mark to enable him to find it out easily in the big crowd. His followers and devotees also did the same. They also put heaps of sands like Siva Lingas, because their Guru did it.

Ramaswamy Shastry finished his bath and Sandhya and came to the shore to take his brass vessel for filling water. He was not able to find out the place where he kept his vessel. He asked his

devotees: "O disciples! What is the matter? I see now countless heaps of sand. Who made all these? I am not able to find the heap of sand made by me. There is a great confusion now. I am bewildered."

The disciples replied: "O Revered Guru, we all saw you making a heap of sand before you took your bath. We thought that we also should make similar heaps of sand before we take our bath. So, every one of us raised a Siva-linga of sand."

Ramaswamy Shastry said to his disciples: "O devotees! In future do not perform any action blindly. Do not follow anybody in a blind way. Understand the significance first before you begin to do anything. You all have done a very foolish act today. I have lost my vessel."

The moral of this story is that you should not do anything blindly. You should not follow any one in a blind manner. First you should think well. If you are not able to understand a thing, approach a Master with reverence and faith. He will explain to you everything in a lucid manner. After grasping the fundamental truths you can begin to act.

5. LORD KRISHNA AND SUDAMA

When Sudama came to meet Sri Krishna, he was in a palace. Now Sudama was poorly clothed and was hesitating to go inside the palace.

Krishna at that time was with Radha. A guard entered saying: "Sire, a poor Brahmin in tattered garments and named Sudama has arrived and claims your honour as his dearest friend; and.....".

But Sri Krishna would not allow the guard to finish. The word Sudama was enough. Brushing aside the guard, he left his seat and ran out of the room barefooted, crying: "Ah! Sudama! My dear Sudama!"

Radha, who was told nothing about Krishna's abrupt departure from the room, felt hurt. Presently Krishna returned accompanied by Sudama and seeing Radha sad, remarked: "Radha, forgive me! The intensity of love that I bear for my Bhaktas is more than my very Self. I am their slave."

Then Sri Krishna gave Sudama the seat of honour, the seat of the Lord. While exchanging the news, Krishna noticed a small parcel under Sudama's arm. This parcel contained a quantity of half-baked rice, which Sudama had brought as a present to the Lord, but was feeling shy of offering so small a present to one so great. Krishna, however, snatched the parcel, from his arm and started putting into his mouth the baked rice, exclaiming: "Radha! Never before did I taste such a delicious thing." Such is the great love that the Lord has for His devotees.

6. THE RICH AND THE POOR

There was a man poor but full of love; and he was loved by others in return. He had his quiet hours of prayer and meditation, and when he spoke a smile played in his lips. Sometimes he wished he was rich. One day he went to a forest, and there he came across an old man. The old man said to him: "I shall give you money, and make you rich, on one condition." The poor man asked, "What is that condition?" The old man replied: "Give me your heart of love." "How should I live then?" asked the poor man. The old man answered, "I have a stone heart; it is wonderfully constructed. I shall take out your heart and put in its place the stone-heart; it will beat as a real heart of flesh." The poor man consented. The old man laid a spell on him; and when he got up he found he had parted with the heart of love, and had got a stone-heart instead. He returned home and found that money came to him without any difficulty; whatever he touched was turned to gold. But he found he could no longer love God or man; he found that he spoke harshly and entertained thoughts of anger. Then he discerned the truth that life without the love of God and man was not a blessing but a burden.

There are many men walking along the pathway of life with stone-heart. Look around and

see how many are chasing the world's vanities—money, power, repute, position, gold, greed, godlessness. They miss the loveliness of life. Lord Yama says unto Nachiketas: "The way to the hereafter is not apparent to the rich man, who is foolish, deluded by wealth. This is the world," he thinks, "There is no other—thus he falls again and again under my sway." Therefore, dear brothers, develop a soft loving heart and walk in the path of love. You will attain the final beatitude of life.

7. THE WISE LADY

A religious-minded charitable Maharaja arranged for a big show. All sorts of things were exposed for free distribution. Any man or woman could take anything he or she liked best. The people of the whole city came to the show. Some took nice clothes. Some took jewels. Some took valuable books. Some took trunks. Some took bags of fresh fruits from Kashmir. All were satisfied. But there was one wise old lady who did not take anything, who was dissatisfied. The Dewan reported to the Raja: "The people of the city are satisfied. But there is an old lady who is dissatisfied. She says: 'I do not want anything from this store-house. I am dissatisfied. I want to see the Raja in person.'" The Raja went to see the old lady in person on the back of an elephant. The old lady said: "O Rajan! Come down. I want to speak to you something very important."

The Raja got down from the elephant. The old lady caught hold of the right hand of the Rajah and said; "O Rajan! Thou art mine now. I do not want these little objects or toys from the store-house in the show. I want to possess you only. The whole wealth of the State belongs to me, as you are mine now." The Raja was astonished at the wise words of the old lady. He kept her in his palace and looked after her very carefully till the end of her life. He regarded her as his own venerable mother.

By entertaining various sorts of desires you run after various sorts of objects. There is neither satisfaction nor contentment. You have become a beggar of beggars by becoming a slave of desires. If you renounce the mundane desires and objects and possess the Supreme Lord of this universe, all your desires will be gratified. Just as the old lady who virtually came into possession of the wealth of the state by taking the Raja to herself, all Divine Aishwaryas will belong to you, if you possess Him through devotion and meditation.

Lord Hari appeared before the boy Prahlad and said: "My dear Prahlad! I am extremely pleased with you and your Tapas. Ask any boon. I shall grant you now." Prahlad replied: "O Bhagavan! Supreme Lord! I do not want anything now. All my desires are gratified by your Darshan. When I possess Thee I do not want anything. My

mind is in perfect Peace now. The wealth of the whole world belongs to me now. The only boon I want from Thee is, "Let no desire crop up in my mind. Make me absolutely desireless. This is my only fervent prayer."

8. LORD GOURANGA AND A LEPER

Lord Gouranga went to Puri. He went to the temple and worshipped the Lord. Then he returned back to his hut. A leper had a strong desire to see Lord Gouranga. He went to the temple and found that Lord Gouranga had already left the place. The leper ran after him and cried bitterly: "O Lord! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" He was very much pained in heart. He fainted. Lord Gouranga had already walked a long distance. He stopped all of a sudden as if someone had called him. He immediately ran back towards the temple. He saw a poor leper in a state of swoon. He lifted him up in his arms. At once he was healed. Leprosy vanished. The leper shed profuse tears: "O Lord! I came to worship thee. I did not come to be healed. My sickness taught me many lessons. I am always remembering God. I have a soft compassionate heart. I am humble. I have discrimination between the real and the unreal. I have dispassion. I feel I may again become proud and may forget God if I am cured of my malady."

Generally people remember God when they suffer from some incurable diseases, when they have nothing to eat, when their son or daughter dies. If their disease is cured, if they put on some fat and flesh they at once forget God. This is Maya. If you remember God even when you are hale and hearty, even when you are in affluent conditions, you will never get any kind of trouble, pain or suffering. Pain or suffering is a great purifier of heart. It is a blessing in disguise.

9. GURU BHAKTI

I

Sankar went to Swami Prakashananda for initiation. He told the Swamiji: "O Maharaj! I have come to your Holiness for initiation. I must realise Atma quickly. I want to become your most devoted disciple also. What should I do now to realise my Self soon and to become your most devoted disciple? Certainly I will obey thy commands. Kindly guide me. Kindly protect me. I am suppliant to Thee." Swami Prakashanandaji said: "O Sankar! I am much pleased with you as you wish to realise the Truth quickly. I shall certainly guide you. Thou art very dear to me as you seem to be a first class type of aspirant. Give me your body, mind and soul. That is all. You can become my devoted disciple." Sankar replied: "Is that all? From this moment I have given to Thee my body,

mind and soul. Kindly initiate me now.” Swami Prakashanandaji gave him Mantra and spiritual instructions. Sankar was doing Japa of the Guru Mantra regularly and following his Guru’s spiritual instructions.

One day Swamiji Maharaj wanted some mangoes for his use. He could not get them in the bazaar. He came to know that his disciple Sankar had plenty of mango fruits in his garden. He sent his disciple to bring some mangoes from Sankar. Sankar sent word through his Gurubhai: “O Gurubhai! Tell my Guru that he wanted my body, mind and soul. I have already given them to him. What more does he want? I cannot give mangoes now. They are meant for the sole use of myself, my wife and children.”

Look at the behaviour of the most devoted disciple Sankar. Such disciples are in abundance in these days. They talk a lot. They write a lot. They say: “We have given up our lives and everything at the Lotus feet of our Guru. He is our revered father, revered Guru, preceptor. He is our God. He is our worshipful Master. He is our all in all.” When they are put to the slightest test, their devotion will evaporate like Salammoniac or spirit of ether. Out of curiosity for getting some Siddhis they approach a Sannyasin or Yogi. When they have found out that they could not get any Siddhi, they will run to another Guru. Every year they will

be having new Gurus. They themselves will not do any rigorous spiritual practice. They wish that the Guru should do some miracle and by this miracle they should attain some Siddhis and Self-realisation also quickly.

II

Vimal went to Swami Paramananda for initiation and said to him: "O Revered Swamiji, make me your disciple." Swami Paramananda replied: "My dear Vimal, remain with me for one year. Let me know your virtues and capacities. Let me study your nature and character." Vimal agreed. He did a little service to his Guru for two months reluctantly. Swamiji called his disciple one day: "Vimal, there is no grass for the cow today. Go to the neighbouring fields and bring some grass." Vimal replied: "Guruji, I am not able to walk today. There is a big thorn in my left foot." Swamiji allowed him to take rest that day. After ten days Swamiji said: "Vimal, today is Ekadasi. Camphor is exhausted. Go to the bazaar and purchase some camphor." Vimal replied: "Guru Maharaj, I have got a very bad headache since yesterday. My head is reeling. I will faint and fall down if I walk." Guruji said: "Vimal, take rest for a couple of days." After a week Swamiji again said: "Vimal, how is your health? I think you are keeping quite fit today. Can you bring a pot of water today from the Ganges?" Vimal replied:

“Guruji, my headache is gone; but I am suffering from a very bad sprain in my right ankle. I cannot walk even a few yards. The pain is unbearable.” Swamiji said: “Vimal! Give some hot fomentation. Take plenty of rest for 3 or 4 days.” After ten days Swamiji said: “Vimal! There are some fruits and sweetmeats for you in that corner room. Take them.” Vimal replied: “Guru Maharaj, how long can I disobey you? I feel ashamed. I will obey you now. I am quite healthy today. He ran at once to the corner room and immediately polished the fruits and sweetmeats.

III

Prakash went to Benares in search of a Guru. He roamed about hither and thither, and met several Sannyasins. At last he came to Swami Vishuddananda, a Sannyasin of very great reputation. Prakash made prostrations and said: “Venerable Guru, kindly instruct me. I long for the attainment of Brahma-Jnana. ”Swamiji replied: “Stay in my Ashram for two or three years. I shall initiate you into the mysteries of Kaivalya. I shall explain to you the right significance of ‘Tat-Twam-Asi’ Mahavakya.” Prakash stayed in the Ashram for six months. He studied Atma-Bodha, Tatwa-Bodha, Vivekachudamani and other books. He came one day to his Guru and said: “Revered Swami, I have got a great

doubt. This doubt is tormenting me for a long time. Your noble self is the proper person to remove my doubt." Swamiji said: "Prakash, what is your doubt? I shall clear it." Prakash asked: "Who is superior, Guru or disciple?" Swamiji replied: "Guru is superior." Prakash said: "Swamiji, will you make me then a Guru? I like to be more a Guru than a disciple, because Guru is superior."

IV

There was a very learned man named Krishna Shastry in Rameswaram. He had a disciple named Ram. One day Krishna Shastry's box which contained Saligramam and Murthy of Lord Krishna was missing. He asked his disciple, "O Ram, where did you keep the Puja-box?" Ram replied: "I kept the Puja box in the place where I performed Puja." The learned Shastry again asked: "Ram, where did you perform Puja?" Ram replied, "In the place where the Puja-box was kept." What a pertinent reply Ram gave his Guru!

Disciples like Vimal, Prakash and Ram can be found in abundance at all times. Many aspirants stay with their Gurus for six months and become Gurus themselves like Prakash and wander about aimlessly. No disciple wants to serve his Guru. There is no better purifier than the constant service of one's own Guru. By constant contact

the disciple imbibes the virtues of his Guru. He is moulded gradually. Study Chhandogya Upanishad. You will find that Indra stayed with Prajapati for a period of 101 years and served him whole-heartedly. In Taittiriya Upanishad you will find: "Acharya Devo Bhava. Let your Guru be your God." Guru is Iswar. Guru is Brahman. A great teacher has said: "Guru and Govinda stand before me now. I do not know to whom I should prostrate first. But I will prostrate first to my Guru only, because it is he who showed me the way to reach Govinda." Modern English educated students have no idea of the holy relationship between a Guru and a disciple. Some disciples criticise their Gurus even. Guru Nindha is a most heinous sin. It can never be expiated even by most rigorous penance. He who obeys the instructions of his Guru implicitly will attain Self-realisation quickly. It is the Guru alone who removes the veil of ignorance in the end. Glory to the Gurus! May their blessings be upon you all!

10. THE ACTION OF YAMA

Gopal was an intelligent and active boy of 12 years old who lived in a village near Madras. One day he was sitting alone on the verandah in a calm and pleasant mood. He noticed a small piece of straw before him. He observed it minutely. In a moment, the straw became a lizard and ate the ants that were moving about. The lizard became a

cat and ate a few rats. Again the cat took the form of a dog and went through the streets. Gopal followed the dog a long distance. The dog took the form of a jackal and ate some sheep, dogs and kittens. Gopal keenly followed the jackal the whole night and wandered through the jungle. In the morning hours, the jackal took the form of a strong, stout man; sat near a tank; caught some fishes and prepared his food. Still, Gopal was bold enough to approach the man, who readily offered a portion of the food.

While they were taking food, Gopal politely asked him, "Dear friend, I am grateful to you. You gave me food when I felt very hungry. From yesterday I am closely following you and observed your taking so many forms. Who are you and what are you?"

"Dear boy, you are right in your observations. I am Yama who takes away the lives of all at the appointed time. At the time of creation, Brahma tells me the fate of all. At the appointed time, I approach the people in a particular form at the fixed place and take away their lives."

Gopal was surprised to hear this and asked him: "I find you are not so cruel as people describe. You were kind enough to give me food also. If you are really Yama, will you let me know when, where and how, I will die?"

Yama said: "Sorry, I will not tell you this. If this is known to you, you will try to avoid the place where your death will take place. You will also try to do Tapas and get the Grace of Lord Siva to avoid death like Markandeya. So, I will not reveal the facts."

Gopal: "I will assure you. I will promise you. I will readily be at the proper place in the appointed time. Have mercy on me and tell me the facts."

Yama: "In your sixteenth year, when you take bath in the Ganges at Benares, I will come as a crocodile and swallow you."

So saying, Yama disappeared and Gopal came back to his house.

Gopal was very much worried about his death. The very thought of a crocodile terrified him. He told the whole story to his intimate friend, Rama, who suggested that he should go on a pilgrimage to Rameshwar and other places to worship Lord Siva.

Rama took Gopal to all the sacred places in South India. Later on Rama brought the photos of the Ghats in Benares where thousands were taking bath. He told Gopal: "He is no man who has not seen Lord Viswanath in Benares. Siva will be pleased only with those who worship Him and purify themselves by a bath in the Ganga. To avoid your death, you must have a bath in Ganga. Lord

Siva appeared in my dream and told me this. I will safely take you with me. As you are nearing 16, you should not waste even a day. Wonderful arrangements are made in the Ghat for bathing. Not even a fish can enter the place." He showed the photos and said: "See how many young boys, ladies and old men delightfully take bath in Ganges."

Somehow Gopal was convinced and they started on a pilgrimage to Benares. They saw the Ganges ghat. Hundreds were taking bath. Gopal was sure that crocodiles could not enter the ghat. So he entered the Ganga to the knee level with Rama in one hand and took a dip. Immediately his friend, in whom Gopal had so much trust, took the form of a crocodile and caught Gopal. Gopal trembled and cried how his own intimate friend brought ruin for him.

Then Yama said: "O Gopal, you did not keep up your promise and wanted to cheat me by avoiding a bath in Ganges. I can understand the thoughts of all. I myself told you that one can avoid death by the Grace of Lord Siva. You wanted to get His Grace by merely visiting temples. You never cared to do any rigid Sadhana by way of Japa, self-purification, meditation, etc. You have wasted your days in thinking about the crocodile and in making plans to cheat me. Now do you see how foolish you are? All those who try to disobey

the Commandments of God and plan some cunning methods to cheat God will undergo the same fate." So saying, the crocodile swallowed the man.

11. SAINT TUKARAM

Sivaji Kansari, a brazier, had intense devotion for the saint Tukaram. He used to do Kirtan with Tukaram. Whenever Tukaram visited his place, he would close his shop and attend his Satsanga. He served the saint with immense faith and devotion. The wife of Sivaji Kansari did not like the ways of her husband. She got enraged at the Saint as he was the cause for her husband's change of mind. She did some mischief one day. She said to Tukaram: "O Saint, today the weather is very chill. Take hot water bath. I shall prepare it for you." The saint consented. The brazier's wife asked the saint to sit down on a plank and poured boiling water on his head. Blisters appeared on the body of Tukaram. The saint kept quiet. His mind remained quite unruffled. He did not speak a word. On the contrary he blessed the woman. As his mind was ever fixed at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, he did not feel any pain at all. The woman was quite stunned when she found that the saint was not a bit affected even though blisters were on his body. Her nature was suddenly changed. She repented very much for her wrong action. She prostrated before the saint

and said: "O venerable saint, pardon me for my cruel action. Through thy grace my mind is entirely changed now. I am quite a different woman now. I have a soft heart now. Allow me and my husband to serve you and remain in thy blessed company." Tukaram consented to keep them in his company. The brazier and his wife joined the band of Tukaram's most faithful followers.

Saints and sages are above body-consciousness. They have conquered the pairs of opposites, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, respect and disrespect, praise and censure, heat and cold, by annihilating the mind and ever dwelling in the Lord. They always return good for call, bless the man who persecutes, and pray for the man who injures. They are an embodiment of mercy and love. Even a moment's company is a blessing for the worldly man. It will produce a radical change in his nature. The benefits of Satsanga cannot adequately be described in words. The glory of a saint or a sage or a Yogi is ineffable.

12. HONESTY OF A FRUIT-SELLER

Once, a Rajah performed a very big feast. He invited many other Rajas, Zamindars, officers. He got plenty of grapes, oranges, apples, jack-fruits, various kinds of vegetables, sweetmeats, etc. But

he could not get good mangoes. But just in time, a fruit-seller was passing along the road in front of the palace with plenty of good mangoes. The gatekeeper called the fruit seller and told him: "Today Rajah Sahib will purchase all your mangoes as there is a big feast. But you will have to give me half of your profit. Then only I can allow you to enter the palace." The fruit-seller first hesitated. Then he consented. He was a very intelligent and humorous man. He entered the compound of the palace.

The Rajah Sahib purchased all the mangoes and asked the fruit-seller: "How much money do you want?" The fruit-seller replied: "Rajah Sahib, I do not want money. Please beat me 100 times with a stick." The Rajah was struck with amazement. He said: "Get plenty of money. Your mangoes are very nice. How can I beat you when you have given me the fruits when I was in urgent need of the same? I will have to offer you special thanks." The fruit-seller again said: "No, no, no. You must only beat me 100 times. I will be immensely satisfied." The Raja Sahib ordered his peon to beat him 100 times very mildly. The peon beat him 50 times and raised the stick beat to him for the fifty-first time. The fruit-seller said: "Stop now, stop now, I have a partner. You will have to beat him also 50 times." The Rajah Sahib was again quite astonished. What sort of a humorous, funny man he was! He asked: "Who is your partner?" The fruit-seller

replied: "When I wanted to enter the compound of the palace, your gatekeeper wanted me to share half of my profit with him. So he must get his share of 50 beatings." The Rajah Sahib immediately sent for the gate-keeper and asked the peon to thrash him 50 times severely. He dismissed him at once from his service and gave rich presents to the fruit-seller for his honest dealing.

A man of honesty will always be respected. Honesty brings its own reward. Honesty is not only the best policy; it is the most sublime virtue. An honest man will always get success in any kind of work. People will place great faith in an honest man.

A greedy man will be hated by his own neighbours. He leads always a restless, discontented, miserable life. A greedy man is like a leech or vulture. He sucks the blood of his neighbours. He exploits on the possessions of others. He will take recourse to tricks and any sort of foul means in order to obtain money. Money is his goal. Money is his God. A greedy man will not hesitate to commit murder even, if he can get some money. Greed clouds understanding and makes a man blind. Selfishness, cheating, double-dealing, diplomacy, untruthfulness and hypocrisy are the constant companions of greed. The root cause for war is greed. Greed is the pet

child of Maya or Avidya. It is like a chamaeleon or Asura. It assumes various colours or forms. There is greed for money. There is greed for power, position, respect and honour. There is greed for name. There is greed for Siddhis, Mahantship, Gurudom, disciples and Ashram among aspirants and Sadhus. Destroy greed by Vichara, discrimination, dispassion, Satsanga, honesty, integrity, disinterestedness, charity and enjoy supreme Peace.

13. KALLU RAM

A poor man, named Kallu Ram, invited Guru Nanak to dine at his house. Guru Nanak accepted the invitation. A day was fixed. Guru Nanak went to the house of the poor man. The door was closed. Guru Nanak knocked at the door, but it was some time before the door was opened. The poor man came out and said: "Revered Sir, I did not open the door in time. Pardon me." Guru Nanak asked: "My dear brother, what were you doing?" The poor man answered: "Guruji! I was driving nails into the wall". Guru Nanak said: "Brother, what are you doing? Driving nails into the walls? Follow me. The poor man replied: "I will obey thy commands. I will follow thee." The poor man left his possessions and children and followed Guru Nanak. He practised the spiritual instructions of the Guru and became Guru Nanak's beloved disciple.

Even now the sweet voice of the merciful Guru comes to you and to me and asks, "What are you doing? Driving nails into the walls? What are you doing? Still hopelessly sunk in the quagmire of Samsara? What are you doing? Still wasting the life in eating, drinking, smoking, playing cards and merry making? Still, forgetful of the purpose of life and the glory and the splendour of Atma and Self-realisation?" What a lamentable state! What a deplorable condition? If the merciful master asks us all today: "Brother! What are you doing? Driving nails into the wall?" what shall be your answer? Shall we not say in right earnest, just as the poor man did: "O compassionate Guru! We are weak. We have neither strong will nor strong faith. We do not know the right path. We have neither devotion nor purity. Our hearts are filled with impurities, cravings and desires. We too shall follow thee. Bless us. Elevate us. Inspire us. Lift us from the miserable earthly life. Protect us. Help us to attain God consciousness."

14. CHOKHAMELA

Chokhamela, the Mahar Saint, was dining one day underneath a pipal tree. Lord Krishna joined him and took food. The wife of Chokhamela brought curds and served them to Lord Krishna. When she was serving, some bit of curd splashed on Vitthal's robes. Chokkamela scolded her severely: "Is this the way to serve our Lord of

Pandharpur? There is no humility. There is no Sraddha. There is no Bhava.”

A Brahmin priest passed along the road. He heard these words. He thought that the Mahar had blasphemed Lord Krishna. He became very furious and struck Chokhamela with his fist on the cheeks. Then he took bath in the river and went to the temple to worship Vitthal. When he looked at Vitthal, he witnessed the stain of curd on His Pitambar. His cheeks were swollen and tears flowed from his eyes.

The Brahmin priest was alarmed. He thought within himself: “What a terrible mistake I have committed! That Mahar is a real saint. He has obtained the Grace of Vitthal. Vitthal loves him very much. I am a condemned wretch. I am a hypocrite. There is no sincerity in my worship. My heart is still stony. I have great Brahmin Abhimana. I hate the depressed classes. I have no real love for all human beings. I am a proud Brahmin. I have injured a devotee whom Vitthal loves most.” The Brahmin priest repented very much. He became very humble. He crossed the river to bring the saint from the other shore. He took the saint to the temple of Vithobha. The swelling in the cheek of Vitthal disappeared. There was a radiant smile in his face.

There is no distinction of caste, creed or colour for God. All are equal in His eyes. All are His

children. He who has devotion is dear to the Lord, be he a Brahmin or a cobbler, a Kshatriya or a Scavenger. He who has devotion is a real Brahmin. He who has no devotion is a Sudra even though he is a Brahmin by birth. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who have equal vision and cosmic love, for they will soon see God.

15. PRINCE NARENDRA

Princess Lilavati, wife of Prince Narendra, worshipped Rama with great devotion. But Prince Narendra never even uttered Ram Nam. This pained Lilavati much. She entreated her husband on many occasions to utter Ram Nam, even were it only once. Narendra was very obstinate. He refused to do that.

Lilavati was in great joy one morning. She sent for the Diwan of the state and told him, "This is a day of great rejoicing for me. I will not tell you the reason now. Feed thousands of Brahmins and poor people. Let there be fireworks tonight. Let there be play of band at the gateways of the city."

The Diwan carried out the behests of the Princess. There was great joy all over the city. Nobody knew why this show was kept up. The Prince witnessed all these rejoicings. He asked the Diwan: "Diwan Sahib, what is the matter today?" The Diwan replied: "I myself do not know the cause for the festivities. The princess ordered me

to do all these things.” Then the Prince asked his wife. She declined to tell him the cause but she in the end had to yield to his repeated requests. She said: “My dear! My heart is quite full today. My joy knows no bounds. I cannot adequately express my condition. I have got now what I wished for and which you declined to give me in spite of my repeated entreaties Last night in sleep you uttered the Name several times. This is quite sufficient for me. I am blessed now. This is a day of rejoicing for me and so I ordered the Diwan to arrange these festivities.” Narendra asked Lilavati: “What was the Name?” Lilavati replied “RAMA.” Narendra exclaimed: “Ah, the treasure that I so long kept as a secret in the innermost recesses of my heart has at last come out!” The Prince said these words and dropped down dead. Lilavati was dumb-founded. She never knew up to this time that her husband was a silent, sincere, unassuming devotee of Rama.

A real devotee will never like to advertise his devotion and piety. It is only the hypocrite who makes much show of his devotion or a display of his piety. He shouts, “Hari, Hari”, wears several Malas round his neck, and sheds false crocodile tears just to attract people for getting some money. Credulous ignorant people are deceived. But the hypocrite is caught in the end. The devotee does not easily reveal himself. He never cares to make himself known. An empty vessel

only will make much sound. The religious hypocrite deceives himself first and then he deceives God and others. All places of pilgrimage abound with religious hypocrites. They are the real vultures of the place who feed on the innocent pilgrims.

Never try to pose as a devotee or a pious man. Do not let people know of your spiritual Sadhana. Do not make a show of Japa and meditation. Do it sincerely. You can wear a Mala around your neck underneath your shirt or upper cloth. Do not trumpet forth your spiritual experiences.

16. A VILLAGE MUNSIFF

Tukaram, the reputed Maharashtra saint, was vigorously doing Kirtan on one Ekadasi day. He started the Kirtan at 8 p.m. and finished it at 8 a.m. the next day. There was a very big gathering. After ten o'clock all left the place except Mr. Ranade, the village Munsiff, of the place. Tukaram drank deep the nectar of Divine Prem. He was fully God-intoxicated. Vithoba of Pandharpur (Lord Krishna or Vitthala) joined Tukaram's Kirtan. Both were dancing in rapturous ecstasy till day-break. Lord Krishna left the place at day-break. Tukaram opened his eyes and saw one man sitting in a corner. Tukaram said to him: "My dear brother! You are the most fortunate man in the world. Did you not see tonight my Lord

Vithoba of Pandharpur who was singing and dancing with me?" The man (the village Munsiff) replied: "O saint Tukaram, I was drowsy all the while. The carpet on which you are standing now belongs to me. My mind was always on the carpet. I did not see anybody. I did not watch your Kirtan also. I was thinking within myself, "When will this Tukaram finish his Kirtan? When will I be able to take my carpet back to my house?"

Mark how the mind gets itself strongly attached to objects! It is the attachment that is the root cause for birth and death and all human sufferings. Even when neophytes sit for meditation the mind runs like a monkey towards various objects. Just as the village Munsiff was ever thinking of his carpet only, so also the new aspirant will be thinking of some object or other that is dear to him. Many old men and women stay at Benares with the belief that they will get Moksha or liberation if they die at Benares, but their minds, instead of being fixed at the lotus feet of Lord Viswanath, will be thinking of their grandchildren and property. Attachment should be ruthlessly cut asunder with the sword of dispassion or of Vairagya. Then only you will enjoy peace. Then only you will be established in deep meditation and Samadhi.

17. KING YUDHISHTIRA

King Yudhishtira was once standing on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh with his queen on his way to Badrinarayan. The queen was rebuking her husband for his virtuous qualities. She asked him: "Why are you thinking of God always? Why do you praise Him? What have you gained by this? What has He given you? You have got nothing but miseries during your whole life. Yet you are ever devoted to the Lord; you are always loving Him."

The King replied: "O My dear! Look at those mountains, the magnificent beautiful Himalayas! How charming and enchanting is the scenery! How our minds are elevated and inspired by their sight! How we love them! Yet we do not ask anything from them. There is nothing to ask. The beauty itself will suffice. The grandeur itself will do. I love God just in the same manner. Will anyone bargain with that All-merciful Lord, our Friend and Protector, Creator and Indweller of our hearts who gives everything for us?"

"God is an ocean of love. He is an embodiment of mercy. When the devotee has attained the fullness of life, when his mind is ever fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord, what more does he want? Is he not the most blessed man on the surface of this earth? Does he not possess the full Aishwarya of

the Lord or the wealth of the three worlds? Will he feel the pinch of any kind of want? All his desires are satisfied. He becomes absolutely desireless. The glory of his state is indescribable.”

“Therefore, O my dear! Develop love for God. Love is a mighty force. Love transforms. Love purifies. Love redeems. Love confers immortality and eternal bliss. Therefore love for love’s sake and obtain Divine grace and then reach Param Dhama, the abode of Supreme Peace.”

18. MOHA OR INFATUATED LOVE

Mohan loved his wife Savitri passionately. Savitri was a very beautiful woman. She had great devotion for the Lord. She had studied Vedantic literature also. She had discrimination and dispassion. She was practising meditation daily. One day Mohan told his wife Savitri that it was his prayer that after his death he may be forever in her company, whether it be in heaven or hell. Savitri asked her husband: “My Lord, what is there in me that makes you desire my company always?” Mohan answered: “Your beautiful face, affection, your treatment, your sweet smile, your curly hair, your rosy cheeks and scarlet lips, your gait, your gestures, your piercing glances, your melodious voice, your songs, all these fascinate me.”

Savitri then asked: "Suppose, I lose my colour on account of anaemia (poverty of blood), I get pits on my face on account of small-pox, I get eruptions all over my body, I get bald head and all hairs fall down, I give you a little harsh treatment, I begin to love somebody else, would you still wish to remain in my company?" Mohan was bewildered and stunned.

Savitri said: "Your love is only Moha or infatuation or passion for body. It is not real love. It cannot last forever. There is an Immortal Self or Atma within the hearts of all beings. It is the fountain source of all beauties. It is the beauty of beauties. You have to realise this Atma through purification and meditation. Then only your love will last forever. Give up this passion for my body. Turn your mind inwards. Dive deep into the recesses of your heart and behold the splendour of Atma."

Mohan came to his senses. He prostrated before his wife and took her as his Guru. He plunged himself in spiritual Sadhana and attained Self-realisation.

PART II

1. LAKSHMI AND SARASWATI

There was a famous saint in Chidambaram, South India. His name was Sadasiva. He had full grace of Saraswati. Saraswati lived with him always. He was well versed in all Shastras. He was very great poet also. He was a Vara Kavi (one who could compose poems in the twinkling of an eye). His reputation spread far and wide. Even people from Northern India came to have his Darshan. But he was very poor. He lived in a grass hut.

Gradually his admirers and devotees built big buildings for the saint. The grass hut developed into a very big Ashram. Money poured forth like anything. Lakshmi dwelt there now. There were nice gardens and plenty of cows. Lakshmi used to dress herself beautifully and walk gracefully in the front hall of the Ashram. But Saraswati was clad in rags. She lived in the inside room.

A quarrel arose between Lakshmi and Saraswati. This is but natural. Lakshmi is the mother-in-law as she is the wife of Lord Vishnu. Brahma was born from the navel of Hari. His wife Saraswati is the daughter-in-law of Lakshmi. Even in the world in every house there is quarrel

between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Mothers-in-law are arrogant and conceited. They expect that the daughters-in-law should serve them with implicit obedience and give them betel with a bowing attitude. Mothers-in-law are illiterate and the present day daughters-in-law are graduates. They do not wish to serve their mothers-in-law. They sit in the chair with their husbands in front of them and read newspapers. The hearts of the mothers-in-law burn. They begin to ill treat their daughters-in-law. Hence there is no harmony in their houses, though they have comforts of every sort and abundant wealth.

Lakshmi said to Saraswati: "O Saraswati! So long as you lived with the saint, there was poverty. The saint was clad in rags. He had very little to eat. Sometimes he starved. He had no place to live in. Just see now after my coming in the Ashram. There is plenty of money. Cows are in abundance. There is a big Ashram. There is plenty of food. There is no scarcity for anything. Tell me now, who is superior?"

Saraswati did not give any reply as she was full of patience and wisdom. Lakshmi repeated to the saint Sadasiva what she told to Saraswati, asked him to recognise her greatness. Everyday there was quarrel in the Ashram between Lakshmi and Saraswati. The saint Sadasiva could not bear this. He said to Lakshmi one day: "O

Lakshmi! I do not want wealth, or a big Ashram. You yourself came in of your own accord. I can live in a grass hut. I am quite satisfied with anything that comes by chance. This Ashram has now become a fighting centre. There is no peace. You can leave me now. I do not mind. I am grateful for your kind services rendered to me till now. You can live at any convenient place you like best. This place is not suitable for you.”

Lakshmi left Sadasiva immediately. She lived in places where there was no Saraswati. She lived in liquor shops, places where grains, cotton, etc., are sold, where people who cheat others and tell untruth live. In these places people prayed for Lakshmi and she easily found her devotees and admirers.

Saint Sadasiva also lived very happily with Saraswati. Without wealth he had great reputation. His name was in everybody's lips. What is wealth after all, if the man who possesses wealth is steeped in ignorance, if he cannot sign his name even? A Vidwan (learned man) is worshipped by all wherever he goes despite his poverty. A wealthy man without learning is like a corpse.

Wherever Saraswati dwells, you cannot find Lakshmi there. Kamban, the greatest Tamil poet of South India who wrote Ramayana, who had direct Darshan of Saraswati whenever he wished,

was very poor. Goldsmith, Walter Scott also was very poor. Sri Sankara says: "Kaupeena-vantah Khalu bhagya-vantah"—That sage with a Kowpeen (loincloth) only but who is full of wisdom is the most happy and wealthy man. Spiritual wealth is inexhaustible. No dacoit can rob it. There is no bankruptcy. It is ever full.

2. MAYA'S SON

Brahman or Atma is the all-pervading, immortal Self, who resides in the chambers of the heart of all beings. He is Sat-chit-ananda. He is the support for this world, body, mind, Prana and senses. Without Him the fire cannot burn, the sun cannot shine, the wind cannot blow, the mind cannot think, the ears cannot hear, the eyes cannot see, the nose cannot smell.

He has an illusory Shakti or power called Maya. Durga, Kali, Gayatri, Kundalini, Saraswati are all manifestations of Maya. Electricity, magnetism and force, are all physical expressions of Maya. Mind, Prana and senses, the five elements are all modifications of Maya only. Maya is a very tactful woman who deludes all, who entraps all in her net. Woman is Chaitanya Maya. Money is Jada Maya. These are her two important tempting baits. Those who are attached to women and money fall again and again in her trap and are caught in the wheel of births and deaths.

Satan or devil or temptation was the first child of Maya. Maya havocs through Satan. The original abode of Satan was heaven. Maya sent Her son to this Mrityu Loka to tempt and delude the people of this world. Passion is the Prime Minister of Satan. Hypocrisy, untruth, vice and anger are the messengers of Satan. Greed, pride, Moha, malice, jealousy are the friends of Satan.

Temptation takes his abode in the eyes, lips, piercing glances, curly hair, gestures, humour, artistic borders of silk sarees, smile and sweet-honeyed speech, graceful gait of young ladies. He dwells in cinemas, liquor shops, houses of sisters of ill-fame, ball-rooms, banks, shops, coffee hotels and restaurants, motor cars and aeroplanes, scents and flowers. He resides in the ties and collars of gents, in their moustaches and hand-kerchiefs. He dwells in the minds of mischief-mongers, scandal-mongers, back-biters, tale-bearers, sycophants, etc.

Satan works mysteriously in a variety of ways. It is he who trains pick-pockets in the art of pilfering, dacoits in plundering, the Dictators in taking hold of others' dominions, the Scientists to prepare poisonous gases for killing the enemies.

Satan simply sits quiet in a majestic manner in his Darbar and watches the activities of his capable messengers and ministers and guides

them. His messengers and prime-ministers carry out his behests implicitly.

Satan is rejoicing in this world along with his mighty messengers, companions and prime-ministers. He forgot all about the bliss of heaven and his mother Maya. He is thus leading an enjoyable life of the Emperor of the world.

Satan's messengers came one day to their Lord and said: "O Venerable Lord! Thou art sitting in your Darbar in a joyful mood. We have heard now a very bad news. The time will become very unfavourable for us. We will be destroyed soon. We hear now that a messenger of God will take birth in Sambal in Vishnu Dutt's house. This messenger will be with all sorts of Siddhis and Riddhis. He will preach Dharma amongst people and will try to eradicate vice. He will surely destroy all of us. We must be very careful. We must be ever vigilant and circumspective."

Maya's son heard the news from his messengers but kept quiet for a long time. Again the messengers came in terror and said: "O my Lord! Why are you so negligent and careless? The messenger of God has already taken his birth. Please get up from your Darbar and devise intelligent and powerful methods now. We are in the danger zone now. Our lives are trembling in the balance. Many messengers of Sanatana Dharma are now preaching to the people: "The

Messenger of God is born. Get ready for spiritual instructions. Do Japa. Do Kirtan. Make enquiry of 'who am I.' Do Charity. Control passion. Observe Brahmacharya. Speak truth. Never hurt others. Destroy vices."

Satan got down from his Darbar and delivered a vehement and stirring speech: "O my faithful messengers! Be bold! Be Cheerful. Do not be afraid a bit of the messenger of God and the preachers of Sanatana Dharma. With one stroke I can kill them all. Stand up. Gird up your loins. Visit all villages and towns and preach: 'The Messenger of God has come. Wake up. Get ready for the spiritual instructions. Purify yourself. Be ready to receive Him. They all will join you.'" By remaining in their company, we can make them impure and make them unfit to approach the Messenger. This is the best device."

The messengers of Satan immediately ran in various directions and said: "O brothers! The Messenger of God has taken his birth. Wake up. Join with us now. Let us all strive hard and purify ourselves to have his Darshan." They repeated all what the Sanatanists used to say. Now Satan and his messengers had a very strong party. They also lived and behaved like the preachers of Sanatana Dharma. He had a large gathering. Thus many were duped.

Many people in the garb of Sannyasins, with beards and matted hair, many pseudo-Yogins and Yogic charlatans, many false preachers and false prophets and pseudo-Avatars appear on the platform, delude and dupe the people in a variety of ways. One preacher says: "O my lady disciples, there is no difference between males and females. Everything is Brahman or Krishna. You are all Gopis. Come. Let us do Rasa Lila." In this way he does corruption and pollutes the atmosphere. One pseudo-Vedantin says: "Asi Brahman, Tusi Brahman. Thou art Brahman. I am Brahman. Let us enjoy the bliss of Brahman." They take the body as the pure Self. Hopeless Vedantins! Can the filthy body be taken as the pure Atma?

O Dear friends! Beware of these false prophets and false messengers of God and pseudo-Yogins. They are the Satan's messengers who also preached the same as the real messengers of Sanatana Dharma. They mislead people and put on the garb of saints, Yogins and Sannyasins, to fill up their stomachs. "*Udhara nimittam bahukrita vesham*". That is all. They are all black sheep. A vigorous search should be made and they should be ousted out ruthlessly. Hence an organised spiritual organisation is the imperative need of the hour.

Even in the Sankirtan field, corruption has come. The canker of corruption must be removed.

Sankirtan movement in U. P., Bihar and Punjab is growing strong now and it is gratifying to note that in every house and every Mohalla, Sankirtan is vigorously done.

Many pseudo-sankirtanists have joined the movement to make out their livelihood and Sankirtan has become a profession for them, because Sankirtan pays now as people are much attracted to Sankirtan. Many pseudo-Miras and pseudo-Bhava-samadhistis have sprung up now. They openly put on Bhava Samadhi in the platform and say they have seen Lord Krishna. They deceive the people by saying that they will show to the people Lord Krishna. This is all down-right duping. The people should be very cautious now. They should not be deceived by these pseudo-Kirtanists. Market boys are trained for performance of Lila and they are brought to the Sankirtan platform for acting. This produces baneful influence on the minds of spectators. Lila can be done only by disciplined, highly evolved souls or Mahatmas or Sannyasins amidst selected devotees in a secluded place. It should not be enacted on a public platform. The worldly-minded people are strongly in favour of Lila Kirtan and exclaim: "Wah-Wah-Wah." when they see the Lila. How ignorant they are! They are easily duped by Satan's messengers.

Darshan of Lord Krishna is not so very cheap. Miras and Avatars come out only once in 500 years. Have Satsanga with Mahatmas. Study religious scriptures. Do Japa. Practise meditation. Reflect "Who am I?" Develop Sattwic virtues. Practise Yama and Niyama. You will be free from the influence of Satan and his messengers. They will be terribly afraid of you and take to their heels.

3. A KAVIRAJ AND HIS SON

Bharinder, was an agricultural peasant in a village near Dacca. He had an eye-sore. He went to consult a Kaviraj in Dacca who was versed in the Ayurvedic system of medicine. The physician, Raj Mohan, who was in charge of the Dispensary, had been to Calcutta to get some herbs for preparing an infusion. Surendranath, the son of the physician, was in charge of the Dispensary during his father's absence. He was an apprentice. He knew a little Sanskrit and a little compounding only. He wanted to show his skill in Ayurveda. He told the patient: "Take your seat. I shall treat you nicely." He turned the pages of his father's book "Medicine—Diagnosis and Treatment." He referred to the Chapter on "Eye-diseases" which says, "In the cases of eye-sores, the ears must be bored, and back side branded with red-hot iron." He immediately bored the ears of the patient and cauterised the back side of the ears. The patient

went back to his village and experienced considerable pain. His eye-sore was not cured.

The old Kaviraj returned from Calcutta the next day. His son told his father: "Revered Father, yesterday I had a very interesting complicated case of eye-sore from a village near Dacca. I successfully treated it. I bored his ears and branded the back side of the ears also. Do you approve of my treatment, dear father? I think I can now manage your dispensary during your absence. You can now have full confidence in me." The old Kaviraj rebuked his son severely and said: "Surendranath, you have done a most foolish action. This is not the right kind of treatment." Surendranath replied: "Father, I have done this on the authority of your own book, 'Medicine-Diagnosis and Treatment.' I am quite right. Why do you rebuke me?"

The old Kaviraj said: "My dear son, now read carefully the heading of the Chapter." The son obeyed the orders of his father and found, to his great vexation and shame that the chapter dealt with the treatment of diseases of cattle and horses.

In the same manner many people read a few religious books in a desultory manner. They do not approach the teachers for clearing doubts. They have imperfect knowledge. They do not study the scriptures in a systematic manner under the

guidance of perfected Masters. They pose as teachers and create great mischief in the world. They have no real understanding of the intricate knotty points of the Vedantic philosophy and Darśanas. They enter into unnecessary discussions on trifling matters and say: "What is the use of offering Tarpanas and performing Shraddha?" "Lord Krishna was only a man. He was very passionate and sported with Gopis. We do not believe in Avatara Vada, image worship, transmigration, rebirths, Vedas. We will accept only what appears to our reason." "Sri Ramachandra also wept for the separation of his wife. He was also affected by the remarks of the washerman. He killed Vali, hiding himself behind the tree. So Sri Rama is not a God. He was only an ordinary man." "We have no belief in Bhagawat, Ramayan or Upanishads." Such persons have perverted intellects. They move about in the world creating dissensions, discord, and disharmony. They are like our Surendranath of the above story. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

One Mantra of any Upanishad inspires and elevates a man to sublime heights of Divine splendour and glory. One Sloka of Bhagavatam or Gita or Ramayana brings peace and strength and fearlessness to the hearers. Mark the supreme intelligence and intellectual calibre and spiritual strength of the writers of these unique books. They were super men with super-intuitional

knowledge or divine wisdom, spiritual experiences and highest spiritual Anubhava. They were Gods themselves. Had they not been Gods, how could they bring out such inspired revelations and illuminating verses?

You can write volumes for one Mantra or one verse. Lord Gouranga brought forth 64 meanings for one Sloka 'Atma-Rama'. There are thousand and one commentaries for Gita now. Still thousand and one commentaries will be published hereafter. Gita is a book of all times. So are Upanishads, Ramayana and Bhagavatam. What must be the nature of the author of the Gita, the celestial songster who sang the song of the Immortal Gita in the battlefield of Kurukshetra? Can there be passion in the author of such an immortal book? Can there be passion in a small boy who did Rasa Lila, who was above sex-idea? The secret of Rasa Lila is beyond comprehension or the reach of an ordinary mortal. Ramananda Ray, Mira and Sri Chaitanya only understood the secret and grandeur of Rasa Lila. A dirty mirror will produce a dirty image. Passionate, people will see passion even in great sages or realized souls. They judge according to their own standard. They see others with their tainted eyes. They suffer from Timira. Hence this blurred vision.

Five Acharyas, Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, Sri Nimbarka, Sri Vallabha had built

their philosophy on the Brahma-Sutras and brought out five schools of philosophy. Look at the wonderful genius of Sri Vyasa, the author of Brahma Sutras. Who else but God can write such unique, infallible Sutras? Even if one hundred Acharyas were to incarnate on the surface of the earth they could build one hundred systems of philosophy out of these mighty Brahma-Sutras.

O! Vain men of false learning with perverted intellects! Give up wrangling and fighting. Purify your .perverted intellects. Sit at the lotus feet of a Brahmanishta Guru. Study the Shastras under them with reverence and faith. Practise, meditate, realise. Now you will have real, infinite divine knowledge. All disputes and quarrels will cease now.

4. POOR KNOWLEDGE

Paparam was a young and energetic man of 30 years. During his early years he spent his life luxuriously and neglected his studies. But as he grew old he repented for his carelessness. He belonged to the Andhra Desa and was conversant with his mother tongue but he could hardly read or write. He had now a great desire to learn English. With this object in view he approached a learned man and requested him to impart him the knowledge of English as he (Paparam) felt the pressing necessity of the same in the daily

conduct of his life. Krishna Rao (this was the name of the man who was approached by Paparam) told Paparam that he had not much time to spare and he would teach him something about the English language.

The first day Krishna Rao taught our Paparam the following three small sentences: "Yes Sir," "No Sir" and "Very well Sir." He also told him the meaning of these sentences in his mother tongue. Paparam was extremely pleased to learn these and was quite satisfied with his knowledge of the English language and thought within himself: "Why should I learn many things? It is only a waste of time. I have no time to learn the whole language and exhaust the dictionary of words and the whole literature. I shall pull on with these Mahamantras. I can manage with this much of knowledge." Paparam thoroughly learnt these by heart and made use of them when opportunities occurred.

One day it so happened that he borrowed ₹100 from a friend of his, whose name was Rangachari.

Paparam executed a promissory note for ₹100 with a time bar of 3 years and with the promise that he would repay the money within a year. Rangachary never asked Paparam about the money and even after three years Paparam never repaid the amount. Rangachary requested his

friend to pay back the amount but Paparam, whose intention was not to return the money, flatly refused payment. Now Rangachary was forced to take legal action and the case was filed in the court. Paparam was summoned by the court and he was put on trial.

The Munsiff asked Paparam: "Mr. Paparam, did you borrow Rs. 100 from Mr. Rangachari on such and such a date?" Paparam thought for a while and said to himself: "I should now display my learning in English before the Munsiff. This is the best opportunity," and replied: "Yes sir." The Munsiff then commanded: "Then pay back the amount," to which Paparam replied: "No Sir." Then the Munsiff said: "You are liable for imprisonment and I sentence you to one year's simple imprisonment." Paparam replied: "Very well, Sir." The poor Paparam was thereafter put into the jail and underwent the period of imprisonment. While answering the questions of the Munsiff he never thought of the seriousness of his answers nor did he understand the consequence of his little knowledge. Had he known this he would have changed the tenor of his argument and escaped from the imprisonment.

5. A PRACTICAL VEDANTIN

Radhakrishna read a few books himself on Vedanta such as Vichar Sagar, Panchadasi, Atma-Bodha, and thought within himself that he was a great Vedantin and a realised soul. He never studied the books under a Guru and never had any initiation or practice of Nididhyasana or Vedantic form of meditation.

One day he went to a shop to drink a cup of milk. He drank the milk philosophising within himself: "There is only one self everywhere. I have also read that 'Everything is mine. All is mine. All is Brahman.' Let me become a practical Vedantin now." The shopkeeper went to the neighbouring shop to purchase sugar. The box in which money was kept was open. He forgot to close it and lock it up. Radhakrishna slowly took one hundred rupee note from the box and walked in the street quietly. He thought within himself: "This money box is mine. This money is mine. Everything is mine. Today only I have realised the right significance of Vedanta. How practical Vedanta is! How beautiful is living in the true spirit of Vedanta! How happy I am! The whole wealth of the world is mine now."

The shop-keeper returned and found the moneybox in an open condition. He counted the money and found that a hundred rupee note was missing. He immediately ran to the street and

caught hold of Radhakrishna and handed him over to the Sub-Inspector of Police.

Radhakrishna appeared before the District Magistrate for trial.

The Magistrate asked: "Radhakrishna, did you take the one-hundred rupee note from the box of the shopkeeper?"

Radhakrishna: "Yes, my Lordship. I took it from the box."

Magistrate: "Why did you take it?"

Radhakrishna: "I wanted to practise and feel Vedanta in daily life. I desired to live in the spirit of Vedanta. I have read in Vedantic books: 'Everything is mine. All is mine.' So I thought that the money in the box is mine and I took it. I have not stolen the money, I am not a thief."

Magistrate: "Very beautiful Vedanta indeed! The world is really in dire need of such Vedantins. Then only the misery of the world can be eradicated. Well, Radhakrishna, hear the other part of Vedanta. Vedanta says: 'I am not body. I am the Self.' Let me see how far you have conquered Deha-Adhyasa or attachment to the body, how far you have gone above body consciousness."

The Magistrate asked the police constable to thrash him severely with the whip till he bled profusely.

Radhakrishna cried out bitterly and said: "O my Lordship! Venerable Magistrate! I have not put this part of Vedanta in practice. This is extremely difficult. I am only body now. Kindly stop the police constable from beating me. I cannot bear the pain any longer. I will swoon presently. I have realised my folly now. Vedanta is really very difficult. I have come to my senses now. I will not commit such foolish acts in future. Leave me now."

The Magistrate said: "Radhakrishna, go to a Brahmanishta Brahmashrotri Guru. Live with him for 12 years. Serve him nicely. Study the Vedas under him carefully. Develop the four means. Cultivate virtues. Hear, reflect, meditate and realise your Self. Then only you can say: 'I am Brahman. All is mine.'

Radhakrishna then followed the instructions of the Magistrate. He went to Rishikesh and found out a Guru. He lived with him for a period of 12 years, practised rigorous Tapas and meditation and eventually realised his Self.

In these days dry or lip Vedantins are in abundance. There is much Vedantic gossiping. There are many Radhakrishnas. Mere talking on Vedanta, mere study of Vichar Sagar or Pancha Dasi cannot make you a real practical Vedantin. Practical Vedanta is rare. You must have a right and proper understanding of the scriptures. You

will have to remove Mal, Vikshepa and Avarana. You will have to struggle hard. You will have to do rigorous Sadhana. You will have to conquer Deha-Adhyasa. You will have to transcend the three Gunas, five Koshas and the three Avasthas and rest actually in your own Sat-chit-ananda Swaroop through constant and intense meditation. Then only you can become a practical Vedantin or realised Sage or Jivanmukta. Glory to practical Vedantins who have realised their Atma! May their blessings be upon you all!

6. RAGHAVAN AND HIS WIFE

Raghavan was the son of a wealthy Zamindar at Chidambaram in South India. He married Pankajam, the daughter of a landlord in Mayavaram. Both lived happily for some years. They had three sons and two daughters. Raghavan did some speculation in business in cotton and lost some of his property. At this critical juncture, Pankajam asked her husband to make a necklace set with rubies and diamonds. He was not able to accede to her request. So she used to quarrel with her husband daily. Raghavan was disgusted with his wife on account of daily quarrel.

He threatened his wife one day and said. "Pankajam! As you are quarrelling with me daily, I will leave the house and take Sannyas." Pankajam

did not stop her quarrel in spite of her husband's warning. One day Raghavan left his house and went to Cuddalore. He stayed there for a week and then returned to his house. He came to his house and said to his wife: "Pankajam! Now I am leaving the house for ever. I will take Sannyas. But I want to tell you one thing. Take great care of the house, property, cows and children."

Raghavan left the house and went to Benares direct. He approached Sri Swami Sankara Bharati and told him: "Swamiji, kindly give me Sannyas. I shall serve you nicely. But Swamiji, you will have to give me coffee and Uppuma (salted halva) in the early morning and afternoon, and Sambar (famous dal soup of Madhrasis) and Rasam (pepper water). I have renounced my wife, property and children, but I have not renounced my coffee. I cannot renounce my coffee. I have got this coffee habit for the last 45 years."

Sri Sankara Bharati was a great dispassionate Mahatma. He lived on Madhukari Biksha. How could he supply our Raghavan coffee, Uppuma, Sambar and Rasam? Swamiji said: "Raghavan! You will have to go back to your house. I live on Bhiksha here. I could not give you all these things. You are not yet ready for Sannyas. Control the tongue. Practise Japa and Tapas for some years and then come to me when you are able to live on dry bread alone." Raghavan

was in a great fix. He was not able to pull on with the Swamiji. Further his mind was on his property wife and children. So he immediately came back to Chidambaram.

Sannyas is made of sterner stuff. Those who renounce the world on account of difficulties, who have not controlled their senses, who have not disciplined their minds, who are not endowed with the four means of salvation (Sadhana Chatushtaya), who have not removed the impurities and oscillation of the mind by selfless service and Upasana, will not be benefitted by renouncing the world. Their minds will have to share the fate of our friend Raghavan.

7. A SANNYASIN

Swami Satchitananda Saraswati, an old Sannyasin, was passing along a street in Madurai. A mischievous and arrogant merchant called the Swami and asked him: "O Swami, please tell me which is superior, your beard or the tuft of hair on the tail of a donkey?"

Five years rolled on. Swami Satchitananda was in a dying condition on account of typhoid fever. He sent one of his disciples to fetch the merchant. The merchant appeared before the Swami. The Swami replied: "O merchant! Now I can give you a definite answer to your question. My beard is undoubtedly superior to the tuft of

hair on the tail of a donkey.” The merchant said: “O Venerable Swami, why did you not give me answer then?”

The Sannyasi replied: “Now my Pranas are departing from the body. There is no chance for me for doing a wrong action. There is no chance for my downfall. Up to this time I have led a very pure life. So I am quite sure of the purity of my life and I am bold enough to say now that my beard is superior to the tuft of hair on the tail of a donkey. The life of a Sannyasi is beset with various sorts of temptations. A Sannyasi may be very famous now. He may have a hopeless downfall at any moment. His very disciples and admirers will forsake him and treat him with contempt and scorn. We cannot say anything definite as regards the character of a Sannyasi or any man till his last breath leaves his body. Maya is very powerful. This world is full of temptations of all sorts. Even an advanced aspirant may fall down if he is careless and if his Vairagya wanes, if he is not regular in his meditation. Have you not heard the story of Viswamitra? He fell a victim to the celestial nymph despite his rigorous Tapas.”

The arrogant merchant was struck with wonder when he heard the wise words of the Sannyasi. He prostrated before the Sannyasi and apologised for his indecent and rude question.

8. A SON-IN-LAW

Rajendar was a religious-minded boy. He was in the habit of taking various sorts of vows in order to control the mind and the senses. He went to his mother-in-law's house for the Deepavali, for the first time. Leelavathi, the mother-in-law of Rajendar, prepared very nice soup with fish on that day for her son-in-law. Rajendar sat down to take his dinner. He was observing vows, viz., not to leave anything, in the plate and not to speak during meals. Leelavathi served him with nice Basmati rice, dal and plenty of soup with fish. Rajendar did not at all like fish. What to do now? He observed Mowna or vow of silence. He could not say that he did not like the fish. He could not leave anything on the plate also. Anyhow he swallowed with great difficulty the whole lot. Again Leelavathi served her son-in-law with another lot of fish. She wanted to please her son-in-law to her level best. She thought that her son-in-law liked fish very much. Rajendar swallowed this lot also with great difficulty. As soon as the plate became empty, Leelavathi served him again with plenty of fish. She thought within herself: "How happy I am! My beloved son-in-law has almost finished the whole lot of soup. I am sure he likes my preparation very much. He never leaves the bones even. He gulps the whole mass with avidity." Rajendar polished this lot also.

Again his mother-in-law placed another big cup full of fish soup in the plate. Rajendar's stomach was about to burst now. He could not take even a single piece. He was forced to speak now and to leave the fish in the plate. He has become a non-vegetarian also. He said: "My dear mother-in-law, I do not like fish at all. As I took the vow of keeping silence and not leaving anything in the plate, I was forced to swallow whatever you served. You also thought that I liked the soup very much. You made a serious mistake. I also made a terrible mistake. My stomach is paining very much. I have swallowed the bones also. Kindly send for the doctor immediately. The pain is unbearable now. The abdominal colic is very severe. I want to lie down immediately. If I wish to vomit also there is no space inside to insert my fingers and tickle the throat." Leelavathi called the doctor at once. The doctor came in and slowly extracted the bones of the fishes with a long forceps. Rajendar was not able to move about or wash his hands. Two men carried him to the verandah and washed his hands. The doctor gave a strong emetic and did lavage of his stomach, gave an enema and gave an injection of morphine. Rajendar was relieved of the pain. He had to break all his vows.

Aspirants make serious mistakes. They should not take too many vows all at once. They should not go beyond their capacity and strength.

They should move step by step in the spiritual path. They should observe one vow for a short time and when they have gained sufficient strength they should prolong the period. They can take up another vow with caution. Observe Mowna for a week. If you are able to keep the vow of silence for a week, if you do not experience any difficulty, then extend your vow for a fortnight, then for a month, afterwards for three months. If you take the vow all at once for three months, you will have to break all the vows like our friend, Rajendar. The object of any vow is to put a check on the wandering mind and turbulent senses. It is a Tapascharya to control the mind to develop the will and to purify the heart.

Similarly you will have to be very cautious in your spiritual Sadhana also. You will have to use your common sense during your Sadhana period. You will have to ascend step by step in the spiritual ladder. Otherwise you will slip and fall down. You cannot attain the highest rung or the Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

9. TWO YOUNG YOGIS

In days long gone by, two Yogis, Ram and Shyam, lived in the Vasishta Guha, Himalayas, fourteen miles from Rishikesh. They discussed together how they could make themselves more comfortable, for near their cave there were many

angular pieces of stones and thorns which cut their feet. Ram said: "Look Shyam! I shall suggest you a new plan to obviate this trouble. I thought over the matter very seriously last night. We shall kill 100 bulls, tan their hides and spread them over the ground as a nice carpet. What do you think of my plan?" Shyam considered this for a month. Then he said: "Dear Ram! I have a better plan. This is quite easy too. I am quite sure you will like it immensely. Let us kill only one bull and make 2 pairs of shoes. Let us use these shoes. Whenever we walk, there will be a carpet below us. Don't you like my plan?" Ram replied: "Hurrah! This is indeed a better plan, Shyam. Thank you very much indeed for your timely, wise suggestion. I think you have got a better brain and better intellect than mine. Let us adopt this plan immediately." They at once killed a bull and prepared two pairs of shoes. They led a comfortable life.

These two were the first Yogis of Himalayas. There is not much difference between one place and another, one woman and another, one Guru and another. The differences are due to the veils of Maya. Ignorant people cling to the objects. But when you are strong enough to break the attachments, you will conquer Maya and you will enjoy supreme peace in whatever conditions you are placed.

Man carries his own thoughts and Samskaras wherever he goes. If a man with undisciplined mind remains in the cave of the Himalayas he will be building castles in the air. He will not be benefited by solitude and seclusion. The desire for comfort is ingrained in the mind. Though the two Yogis renounced the world, yet they wanted comforts while they remained in the caves. The idea of comfort must entirely die. Wherever there is the idea of comfort, there is Dehadhyasa or attachment for the physical body. Kill this idea of comfort and Dehadhyasa and identify yourself with the Supreme Soul or Paramatma and enjoy eternal Bliss or Kaivalya.

10. EKANATH

Janardhan Swami was the Guru of Ekanath, the reputed Saint of Maharashtra who wrote the Bhagawat. Ekanath would ask his Guru again and again: "O Venerable Guru, how shall I realise God?" But Janardhan Swami never gave a definite reply.

On one occasion Ekanath had to find out a mistake of one pie in the accounts which he kept for his Guru. So he sat up at night at 8 o'clock. He turned his eyes again and again over the pages of the Cash Book and Ledger. The clock struck 3. Still he found no trace of the mistake. He asked himself: "Shall I even for once, fail in my duty and

incur my Guru's displeasure?" He took rest for fifteen minutes. He again turned the pages and looked into the figures with great attention and concentration. At last he found out the mistake.

He was in great joy. He clasped his hands and laughed heartily. He began to sing a song. He turned back. He saw his Guru standing. Ekanath fell at his feet. "Now, my child," said Janardan Swami, "you know the way to realisation. Can you not turn your mind inwards with the same concentration and find Him out in the chambers of your heart?" Ekanath replied: "Revered Swamiji, I have found out the way now through thy grace. I shall practise rigorous meditation and attain God-realisation quickly."

From that day onwards Ekanath was very earnest and diligent in his Sadhana. He came face to face with Lord Krishna within a short period of time.

PART III

1. PRINCESS VIDYAVATI

Princess Vidyavati was the ruler of the Magadha Kingdom when she was only eighteen years old. She was a very pious and cultured lady. She was well versed in the study of Gita, Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and the six schools of philosophy. She refused to marry although her parents and relatives pressed her very much several times. She had Viveka and Vairagya to a considerable degree. She spent her time in Brahma-Chintana and study of Upanishads. She was an able ruler and politician also, like Queen Chudalai.

She did intense Tapas and Sadhana and was an Anubhava-Jnani. She conducted classes in Vedanta daily in the afternoon between 2 and 4. Many pundits and scholars used to attend her classes. She cleared the doubts of all in a wonderful manner.

One poor old Brahmin priest used to attend her classes very regularly. He used to come half an hour earlier and leave the place when all had left. He used to take his seat near Vidyavati. People

thought that this Brahmin priest had much interest in Vedanta.

One day when the class was over, the Brahmin priest followed her silently to her palace. The princess saw him only when she reached her palace. She gave him a cordial reception, offered him respectfully a seat and enquired: "Sir, how can I serve you?" The Brahmin priest replied: "You are the most beautiful girl in this world. I am very much charmed by your beauty. I have an intense desire to marry you." The princess replied: "I am very much delighted to know your wish. I will satisfy your desire." The Brahmin was immensely pleased when his request was granted by the lady. He asked the princess: "Will you fix a date for our marriage?"

Princess: "Any day you choose."

Brahmin: "Tomorrow is the most auspicious day. May I come?"

Princess: "By all means."

Brahmin: "At what time should I come?"

Princess: "You can come at 2 p. m."

Brahmin: "Then I am grateful to you. I am the most fortunate man in the world. I will come prepared for the nuptials. Kindly instruct the man at the gate to allow me to come inside with all my things. I will come with all necessary things for the nuptials. Kindly inform the public about our

marriage and invite them also. We will celebrate the marriage in a grand manner.”

In his presence she called her men and gave orders to announce about the marriage and instructed the gatekeeper to permit him to come to her on the following day at 2 P. M. All her relatives and officers were stunned. They were much grieved to hear that the princess was going to be married with a poor Brahmin priest.

The Brahmin left the palace and directly went to some money-lenders and borrowed a big amount at high interest. He purchased silk sarees, cot, bed, pillows, etc. He spent a restless night. He dressed himself with silk clothing and lace turban, and proceeded to the palace with all his things. The gatekeeper immediately allowed him to go inside the palace. He entered the hall where Vidyavati was delivering lectures on Vedanta. The Brahmin priest bowed down before her and took his seat with a majestic attitude. While the Princess was discussing a very important point in Vedanta, the Brahmin priest interfered and asked her: “I have brought all the necessary articles. May I fix the cot?” The Princess calmly replied: “O yes, you can fix the cot. I will be ready presently.” In a short time the Brahmin priest nicely decorated the cot and again interfered and said: “It is getting late. Time is precious; you have fixed the nuptials at 2 p. m.

today. You have forgotten this. Enough of your Vedanta. Keep up your promise.”

Princess Vidyavati was an embodiment of patience. Nothing can disturb her peace of mind. She kept a cool, balanced mind at all times and in all conditions, because she was resting in her own Satchidananda Swaroop. She replied: “Yes, I will attend to you first and then continue the class.” She stopped her lecture and took her seat on the cot which was fixed on the same platform. She said: “Dear Sir, now I am ready for the nuptials. Come and take your seat by my side. ”The Brahmin said: “You are an innocent girl. You do not know anything of worldly Vyavahara. This is a thing to be done secretly. Ask your servants to remove the cot to a private room. ”The Princess said: “Never mind of the public. Come and take your seat here. I cannot waste my time. Many are waiting for the class. I must go and finish the lecture.”

The Brahmin became very nervous. He trembled before her. He could not speak a word. Then the Princess got up from the cot and spoke to him: “You are a Brahmin. I am a Kshatriya girl. You lost your senses under the influence of passion. You attempted for a thing which is beyond your reach and which should not be done. Is this a virtuous action for a Brahmin priest?”

“You wish to do an evil action secretly. You need not be afraid of the public when you publicly do a right action. The very idea that you want to do something secretly shows that you are attempting to do a thing which is not just and proper. Anything done in secrecy is a sin. Even though you do certain actions secretly without the knowledge of the public, yet you cannot hide them from the Lord who is seated in your heart. He is watching all your actions. He knows your inner thoughts and motives. You cannot cheat Him, although you imagine that you can cheat the public. In cheating others you cheat yourself only. There is nothing but the Self. All indeed is Self or Brahman. There is no such thing as diversity. This is the emphatic declaration of sages who have realised the Self. Never attempt to do evil actions. You will be ruined if you do so.”

“Another point is that the husband must be more wise and powerful than the girl he chooses. He must be superior to her in every respect. Then only he can lead a peaceful family life. You tremble before me. You have no strength to stand before me. You sit at my feet when I offer you an equal seat. You speak to me in a low begging voice. Are you a proper man to marry me?”

“You are aged over fifty. Many teeth have fallen. The hairs have become grey. Yet passion has not left you. You want to marry a young girl of

another caste. You are a Brahmin priest. You should possess Viveka, Vairagya, Sama, Dama and should practise Brahma-Vichara at this age. Is it proper on your part to behave in such a mean manner?

“I find you are overpowered by passion. You have no power of discrimination. You have not realised the glory of a chaste life. You are running after the filthy, perishable body of a female to satisfy your senses and derive momentary pleasure. You have forgotten the beauty of beauties, the fountain head of beauty which is hidden in the chambers of your heart. You have not attempted to attain that immortal essence which will give you eternal peace and everlasting bliss. You can attain the supreme seat by leading a virtuous life and treading the path of Truth. Though you have attended my classes for months, you have not gained anything. You have not done any spiritual practice. Kill this demon lust by practising Brahmacharya and regular meditation. Know thyself and be free. I shall lift you up from the quagmire of Samsara.”

Now the Brahmin priest thought over the matter very seriously. He came to his senses. He realised his folly. He repented for his foolish action. He did severe penance. He prostrated at the feet of Princess Vidyavati and implored for initiation into the mysteries of Kaivalya. He

surrendered himself entirely to the Princess. He took her as his Guru. The Princess opened his eyes and gave him initiation. He followed her instructions implicitly. He disciplined his Indriyas and developed the four means (Sadhana Chatushtaya). He did intense and constant meditation and attained the goal of life, the final beatitude.

2. CONFERENCE OF MOSQUITOES AND BUGS

Mosquitoes:—"O Lord! Thou hast given us a proboscis to sting and suck blood. Thou hast created man with fresh and pure blood. Thou hast created us with a tiny body and hast given us wings also to enable us to fly away when we are in danger and to quickly pass on from one man to another and drink blood to our heart's content. Thou art kind and all merciful to our race. But why have you created an enemy also? Mr. Wind is our only enemy. He is very cruel. We have not done him anything wrong. But he drives us away and disturbs us when we enjoy our hearty meals. At the very appearance of Mr. Wind, we have to go far, far away. What shall we, poor creatures, do? Have mercy and remove our enemy from this earth."

The Lord:—"My children! You are all very dear to me. I cannot decide the case without the

presence of the accused. I shall send word for him. Let me hear his statement also. Then I shall decide the case and show justice.”

The moment Mr. Wind approached the Darbar, the mosquitoes had to flee for their lives. The Lord could not decide the case in the absence of any one of the parties. So the Lord said: “O Dear Mr. Wind! The mosquitoes filed a serious complaint against you. When they come back, we shall proceed with the case.” So long as Mr. Wind was there, the mosquitoes could not approach the Lord.

Now a wise mosquito had an inspired suggestion: “Let us call for a Round Table Conference and find out means and methods to destroy our enemy.” Accordingly invitations were sent out to Messrs, Bugs, Flies, Bees and other comrades. At the opening session of the Conference, the Mosquitoes addressed the Bugs.

“Dear Brothers! You are all very happy. You drink the blood of men to your heart’s content. You live in the cot with them. You do not have any enemy at all. Our case is very pitiable indeed Mr. Wind is our chief enemy. When the wind blows, we are driven away. We can hardly approach men. Our endeavours are frustrated. Your lot is very enviable. Now we have assembled here to get suggestions to find out means to destroy our enemy.”

Bugs:—"Brothers! You have not understood the real nature of Maya. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view. A doctor thinks that the barrister is more happy. A businessman thinks that a professor in a College is more happy as he enjoys many holidays. Similarly you think that we are more happy. Our position is very miserable. Just hear our story. We do not sting men like you. We do not injure them in any way. We know many devices and stratagems. We can suck the blood of man and yet man may not feel this; he may sleep soundly. We hide ourselves in the holes of the cot and underneath the pillows and in the corners of carpets. When he begins to search for us, even when we are caught, we remain motionless and pretend to be dead. But man in the mood of vengeance crushes us ruthlessly in the end. There is no way for our escape. We have no wings to fly. You fly away with the help of your wings. We think that you are very lucky. We want to approach the Lord and pray for wings or to create men without eyes. Then we will be happy."

Flies:—"O Brothers! I think you are all happy. You drink the blood of men and move about with joy. Our lot is very miserable. Our suffering is indescribable. We sit on the body of man to suck blood. He is very cruel. He drives us immediately. He gives us a good slap on our face. We are not crushed. We escape in a mysterious manner. But we have to starve for many days. Though we are

fond of blood, we could not get even a drop. Let us all approach the Lord. We will pray to Him to create human beings without hands.”

In the Darbar of His Divine Majesty, the bugs, mosquitoes and flies represented their grievances before the Lord. The Lord heard the statements of grievances and prayers patiently, but kept silent. He did not speak a word. Even God cannot decide such cases and cannot remove the grievances of all entirely

In offices, Ashrams and institutions those who have not evolved, fight amongst themselves very often out of jealousy, hatred and petty mindedness and report their grievances to their superiors or heads very often. In these cases the superiors or heads will have to be silent. Then only there will be peace. Aspirants or clerks do not attempt to improve themselves by following the advice given by their master or superiors. They have not understood the nature of Maya. They cling to their egoistic habits and traits tenaciously and allow their minds to move in the old ruts. What can the masters do when the students are arrogant, conceited, impertinent and self-assertive?

In this world jealousy is the chief enemy of peace. It assumes the form of petty mindedness and does great havoc and mischief. It never spares educated people and Sannyasins also. It is the

chief weapon of Maya. When a Sannyasin becomes famous, others become jealous. He does not like that any other man should be famous like him. It is easy to renounce wealth. It is easy to renounce wife and children. But it is extremely difficult to renounce name and fame. Jealousy assumes the form of Irsha and Asuya. When your heart burns, when you see another man in a prosperous condition, it is Irsha. When you superimpose evil qualities in a virtuous man out of jealousy, it is Asuya.

He who has eradicated all forms of jealousy through the development of a magnanimous heart and Atma Bhava and enquiry of 'who am I?', is the most happy and peaceful man in the world. People, who are not contented with their lots, will be restless and undergo suffering like the bugs, mosquitoes and flies. God has created every being in this world with some conveniences and inconveniences. Good and bad are relative terms. See good in everything. Have a contented life and enjoy Peace and Bliss. This is the secret for the attainment of Peace and Bliss.

This is a relative world of pleasure and pain, good and bad, convenience and inconvenience, comfort and discomfort. You can find supreme peace in Atma only. Realise thy Self and be free from all grievances, inconveniences and discomfort.

When there is one Self in all beings, how can one be jealous of another, how can one exploit another, how can one hate another? Behold the One Self in all beings and rest in the everlasting peace of the Eternal!

3. A COBBLER SAINT

Once upon a time there lived a great cobbler saint in the city of Pataliputra. He would get a few annas daily by mending shoes. He would distribute three quarters of his earnings to the poor people and spend the rest for himself. He was a devotee of Lord Rama. He would finish daily 4 lacs of Japa of Ramnam. He slept for three hours. Nobody knew that he was a saint.

One day a Bania came to him to mend his shoes. He repaired it. The Bania told the cobbler that he was going to Benares to take a dip in the holy Ganges. The cobbler told the Bania: "Revered Sir, I shall give you one pie. Please give this pie to Mother Ganges in her right hand, only if she raises her right hand above the surface of the water." The Bania was very curious when he heard this. He consented. He took one pie from the cobbler and proceeded to Benares direct.

The Bania took a bath in the Ganges and thought of the cobbler. Immediately the right hand was seen above the surface of the water. He placed one pie in the right hand and left the Ghat.

He heard a voice: "Why do you run away so soon? Take this golden bangle set with diamonds and hand this over to the cobbler as my Prasad." The Bania took the bangle and proceeded to Gaya. The greedy Bania thought within himself: "Now, why should I give this to the cobbler? Let me sell this to somebody and utilise the money for myself." He went to the bazaar and tried to sell it. One merchant told him: "This is a most valuable bangle. I have not sufficient money. I am unable to purchase this. Try somebody else." The Bania went to several people. He was not able to sell it. In the end he went to the Dewan of a Maharaja. The Dewan saw the bangle. He thought that the Maharaja would purchase it for the Maharani. He took the bangle and gave it to the Maharaja.

The Maharaja gave it to the Maharani. The Maharani liked it very much. The Maharaja paid four lakhs of rupees to the Bania. The Bania was very much delighted. He purchased a nice bungalow, married a young lady, engaged several servants and was leading a princely life.

The Maharani asked the Maharaja to procure another bangle for her left hand. The Maharaja sent for the Bania. When the Bania came the Maharaja said: "The bangle that you gave me is very nice indeed. Please supply me another bangle for the Maharani's left hand." The Bania replied: "I had only one. I am unable to supply you another."

The Maharaja said: "If you do not give me another bangle within a month, your head will be cut off."

The Bania became despondent. He was sunk in grief. He thought within himself: "How can I see the cobbler? I have already deceived him. He seems to be a great devotee. Anyhow let me tell him the whole truth. He will pardon me. He may give me another bangle through the grace of Mother Ganges." He made up his mind to go at once to the cobbler. He went away straight to the cobbler.

The cobbler smiled and asked the Bania: "Did you give the one pie to the Mother Ganges in her hand?" The Bania narrated in detail what had happened. He shed tears and fell at the cobbler's feet and said: "Pardon me. Thou art a great saint. My life is in jeopardy. Please give me another bangle." He told the Bania: "Put your hand in this tin vessel which contains leather and water and take as many bangles as you like." The Bania said: "I shall take only one." He took one bangle, marched direct to the Maharaja. He handed over the bangle to him.

The Maharaja was struck with wonder. He gave the bangle to the Maharani. He asked the Bania: "From whom did you get the bangle?" He replied: "There is one cobbler saint at Pataliputra. He gave me these two bangles." The Maharaja said: "Will you take me to him?" The Bania said:

“Yes, surely I will take you.” They both went to the cobbler. The Maharaja asked the cobbler: “Have you got any more bangles?” The cobbler replied: “I have any number. Please put your hand in this tin vessel and take as many bangles as you like.” The Maharaja took 50 bangles. The tin vessel was again filled with 50 bangles. The Maharaja again took those 50 bangles. Again the tin vessel was filled with fifty bangles. The Maharaja and the Bania were struck with awe and wonder. He thought within himself: “This cobbler seems to be a great saint. He is extremely happy, though he earns a few annas daily. He has sway over the wealth of the whole world. What is the use of ruling over this big state? My mind is full of worries and anxieties. Let me become a disciple of this great saint. Let me have Darshan of God.”

Great Vairagya dawned in the Maharaja. He at once renounced his state and became a disciple of the cobbler saint. The cobbler-saint initiated the Maharaja-disciple into the mysteries of Rama Taraka Mantra. The new royal disciple did constant Japa of Rama Mantra, meditated on Lord Rama and eventually had Darshan of the Lord. The Bania also renounced his wealth and became a disciple of the cobbler.

Anyone who has faith and devotion can realise God. God is pleased with the devotion of a man. He never looks into the caste or creed or cult

or position of the man. Anyone can attain God-consciousness in any walk of life while discharging his own duties, provided he has faith, devotion, dispassion and purity and remembers Him at all times. The cobbler earned his bread by mending shoes and lived in God always. Wealth cannot give you real lasting happiness. The Maharaja had to renounce his state in order to taste the nectar of Immortality. Therefore, do not run after wealth and position. Be contented with whatever you have. Plunge yourself in Nama Smarana. Discharge your daily duties as Iswararpana. You can realise God amidst activities whilst remaining in the world. This is the central teaching of Gita.

4. JABALA RISHI

Jabala Rishi did rigorous Tapas by standing in a River for a period of 30 years. He did lot of Japa of Mantra and attained some Siddhis also. He opened his eyes after thirty years, and found two fishes mating. He was excited. A curious desire arose in his mind. He thought: "Let me also marry and procreate children like the fishes." He at once proceeded to the neighbouring Rajah of a state and told him: "O Rajan! I wish to marry your daughter. Kindly give her to me in marriage." The Rajah said: "You are very old. My daughters will not like you." The Rishi replied: "I have got a Siddhi. I can assume any form at my will

(Kama-rupa). I will become a handsome young man. Your daughter will be attracted towards me. There is no doubt of this." The Rajah took the Rishi inside his palace. He had forty daughters. The Rishi immediately became a very handsome young man. All the forty daughters fell in love with the Rishi. The Rishi married the forty daughters of the Rajah and lived happily for some time. He brought forth 80 children, two from each wife.

One day he fell into a pensive mood and thought within himself: "I am a great fool now. All my rigorous Tapas have gone. I am a worldly man. Maya has deceived me! How passionate I am now! I have become a slave of passion. I am a slave of these girls. I have no peace of mind. The passion is daily increasing. Desires can never be overcome by enjoyment. Let me again start rigorous Tapas and attain Moksha in this very birth." He at once renounced the world, retired into the forests and started severe Tapas and meditation.

Passion is very powerful. Even a sage who is practising constant meditation is sometimes carried away by the impetuous and turbulent senses if he is a bit careless. If Vishwamitra and Parasara who were living on leaves, air and water were enchanted at the sight of a woman, what would be the fate of worldly people who are living on rich luxurious food, who attend cinemas, who do not practise any kind of Yoga Sadhana? If they

can control their passion, the Himalayas will float in water and fire will burn downwards.

Aspirants should be very careful. They should not mix with worldly people. They should be ever vigilant. They should be very careful in their diet. They should eat simple, bland food. They should plunge themselves in Japa and meditation. Then only they are quite safe. They will not fall in the clutches of passion.

People who remain in the world also can control their passion if they lead a simple, pious and regulated life, if they remember the Names of the Lord, if they do Japa and meditation, if they take simple food, if they do not attend cinemas. Just as mist cannot stand before the sun, so also passion cannot stand before dispassion, discrimination, Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Atma Vichara and Brahma-Jnana.

5. A SHAMELESS MAN

Sunder Das one day stole a bunch of bananas in the garden of a Zamindar. He was found out. The Zamindar instead of handing Sunder Das to the police or beating him, asked a barber to shave his head and put him on the back of an ass facing the tail. A garland was made of the stolen bananas and put on his neck. Drums were beaten and Sunder Das had a procession throughout the whole town. When the procession came in front of

his house, his wife came out and was very much vexed when she saw her husband in this miserable condition. But Sunder Das was very happy. He removed the garland of bananas from his neck and threw that to his wife and said: "My dear Subhadra! I am coming within fifteen minutes. The procession is almost over. I have to finish one street only. Prepare for me some hot cakes out of these bananas. I am very hungry."

This mysterious world abounds with such shameless people like Sunder Das. They do disgraceful acts daily though they are educated and yet they do not feel for such acts. They never try to admit their mistakes and improve their character. They again and again repeat the same old evil actions. Their minds have become blunt and insensitive. Lustful people have neither Lajja (shame) nor fear. When they are overpowered by passion they do any sort of heinous action. They are not afraid of consequences. Hypocrites and liars, and cheats never attempt to improve themselves. They do not think even for a moment how much harm they are doing for themselves and for their neighbours. And yet they think they are wise and spotless. They try to find out mistakes in others. This is Maya. Maya makes the intellect perverted. They have no idea of the law of cause and effect. Such people are worse than animals. They ought to have been born as horizontal beings. But the All-merciful Lord has

given them a lift out of compassion and yet they do not attempt to improve their character. What a sad plight! What a deplorable condition! Will they not feel now at least and rectify their mistakes? It is not too late now. Yet there are chances for them.

The present method of education cannot improve the character of a man. What is wanted is moral culture and spiritual education. Some intelligent people devise intelligent methods to cheat others. They do clever swindling, because they know the laws and the ways of escape also. Spiritual education is real education. Spiritual culture is real culture. Spiritual and moral culture alone can regenerate and elevate a man and eradicate all his defects and weaknesses. Spiritual Universities are the need of the hour.

6. THE YOUNG MAN AND A PUNDIT

One evening a young man was walking along the banks of a river with a woman. He had a bottle in his hand. Sometimes he carried the woman on his back. After walking a short distance the woman sat on the ground. The young man also sat by her side and shampooed her body. He drank the contents of the bottle.

A Brahmin Pundit of the village who was taking a walk on the banks of the river was closely watching the actions of the young man. He ran to the village and said to the headman of the village:

“A young immoral man is drinking wine publicly. He is keeping a woman also. He is doing immoral actions openly. He is setting a bad example. He must be driven out at once from this place.” The head-man brought some people to drive them away. As there was heavy rain and hail-storm, they stopped in a shed and watched the actions of the young man. The young man again drank the contents of the bottle and shampooed the body of the woman. The head-man also thought that the young man was an immoral wreck who was addicted to drinking.

A boat in the river was capsized on account of the heavy storm. The passengers were about to be drowned. In the twinkling of an eye the young man jumped into the river and saved the passengers by bringing them to the shore one by one. The Brahmin Pundit and the head-man did not even stir from the shed. They were laughing and joking. The rain stopped. The head-man came to the young man and said: “How is it you are drinking liquor openly and doing immoral actions? Who is this woman?” The young man replied: “I have walked already 30 miles today. I have to cover a distance of ten miles more before I reach my village. I am dead tired. I am very thirsty. Today is very hot. This bottle contains pure Ganga water. This woman is my mother. She is suffering from a disease of heart and acute type of rheumatism. She cannot walk. I carry her on my

back. I shampoo her body as she suffers from unbearable pain.”

The Brahmin Pundit put his head down in shame. The village head-man was stunned. He thought within himself: “I have formed a very bad and hasty opinion of this handsome young man. I did not use my common sense. What a great mistake I have committed! Look at his sympathetic heart. How brave he is! He at once jumped into the river and saved the life of the passengers. We were only making some fun. How politely he talks! This lady is in acute agony.” He severely scolded the Brahmin Pundit. He at once arranged for a bullock cart and sent them to their village. He gave them plenty of cow’s milk.

You should always think well before you come to a conclusion. Appearances are not always to be trusted. You should possess keen discernment, good power of judgment, abundant common sense. You must have correct facts and detailed particulars before you take any action in a matter. You must not be carried away by the false reports of mischief-mongers and wild rumours. Mere book-learning will not help you much. It will make you arrogant and proud.

7. SULOCHANA

Gupta Babu was a retired Tahsildar. He lived in Calcutta. His son Narendra was a graduate of

the Calcutta University. He was a very fashionable boy. He was an up-to-date gentleman. His father wanted to marry Narendra to Sushila, a poor man's daughter, a very pious girl who knew Sanskrit, who had studied Gita, Upanishads, Ramayan, Bhagawat. She could sit on Padmasan for full three hours at a stretch for Japa and meditation. She could sing songs from Tulsidas or Surdas. But Narendra did not like to marry Sushila. He wanted to marry Sulochana, a very fashionable girl, who had studied many up-to-date novels, who was also a graduate of the Calcutta University. The lives of Mira Bai, Savitri, Madalasa, Gargi did not appeal to Sulochana. She used to draw inspiration from the stars of the silver screen. She had learnt the art of hoodwinking the hubby. She could play on piano.

Narendra married Sulochana. They both lived happily. They used to walk along the beach with clasped hands. Sulochana would sometimes appear in her new loose fashionable semi-transparent blouse or gown in front of Narendra. They both used to walk along the Chowringhee Road for shopping. Sulochana would put her hand on the neck of Narendra while walking on the road. Narendra enjoyed her company very much.

One day Narendra had to go to his office at 8 o'clock in the morning. He said to Sulochana: "My

dear, I have to go to my office a little earlier than usual. My officer is coming today for inspection. Kindly prepare the tea just now." Sulochana was reading the newspaper as there was some sensational news and an interesting editorial column. She said: "Please wait for ten minutes. Let me finish the editorial column." Narendra came after ten minutes and said: "Dear Sulochana! It is getting late. Please prepare the tea immediately." Sulochana did not get up. She was reading the newspaper with absorbing interest and attention. Again Narendra came after fifteen minutes and said in an angry tone: "Sulochana, what are you doing? What is the matter with you today? Don't you hear my words? Get up and prepare the tea at once. I am in a hurry." Sulochana was offended. She said: "Look here. Don't talk much. You are a graduate. I am also a graduate. Why should I serve you? Why don't you prepare the tea and serve me now?" Narendra was put to great shame. He put his head down and quietly left the place. He himself prepared the tea and went to the office. In the evening he went to a solitary place in a garden and thought within him; "What a great fool am I? I was carried away by this fashionable girl. My wise father wanted me to marry Sushila. Sushila, though poor, was a pious, devoted girl. I would have been very happy had I married her. She would have been very obedient to me. Look at the

arrogant nature of this fashionable wretched girl, Sulochana! How contemptuously she has treated me today! I cannot live with her even for a single moment.”

Such is the condition of fashionable men and women who have no purity, devotion and ethical training. It is very difficult to pull on for a poor man with an expensive, ease-loving fashionable girl. It is better for a man to marry a poor virtuous, devoted girl than to marry a fashionable girl with higher education but without devotion and moral virtues. It is better for a girl to marry a poor devoted husband than to marry a fashionable man.

8. A SHOPKEEPER

In Benares there was a shopkeeper by name Gopalakrishna. He had two daughters named Uma and Urmila. Uma was married to a gardener and Urmila to a potter. Uma and Urmila lived happily with their husbands.

Gopalakrishna went to see his daughter Uma on a New Year's Day. He asked her: "How are you, my darling Uma?" Uma replied: "Dear father! We are very happy. We save fifteen rupees monthly. We have a son. Please pray to God that there should be good rain now so that the plants in our garden may get nicely watered."

Gopalakrishna went to the house of Urmila, his second daughter, and asked her how she was. She replied: "Dear father, we are happy. We are blessed with a daughter through the grace of God. Please pray to God that it should not rain for a week, so that our earthen pots may get dry, otherwise we will undergo severe loss."

Now Gopalakrishna was in a great fix. He could not decide for whom he should pray. He sat for a while in a deep pensive mood on the banks of the Ganga and then came to the conclusion that everybody in this world was extremely selfish. He at once renounced the world and went to Prayag. He came in contact with Swami Bhaskarananda. He got initiation into Rama Taraka Mantra from the Swamiji and repeated 13 crores of Japa of Rama Mantra and had Darshan of Sri Rama.

Selfishness is a deadly curse. It is the enemy of peace and happiness. It makes the mind ever restless. It contracts the heart. A selfish man is petty minded. He never cares for the well being of others. Days and nights he toils for his own selfish interests. He has a small limited circle. He loves his wife, children and a few friends. That is all. Greed, hypocrisy, falsehood, anger, hatred, jealousy are the constant companions of selfishness. Selfishness is the first child of Maya or ignorance, and an intimate chum of egoism. If selfishness wanes, heart expands. No spiritual

progress is possible without eradication of selfishness. Satsanga and selfless service, generosity, disinterestedness, nobility, and enquiry of 'Who am I,' Kirtan, prayer, meditation will root out selfishness. He who has eradicated selfishness is adored by the people. He is the most happy and peaceful man. It is through God's grace only that an aspirant gets a pure heart and a subtle intellect and is thus able to scrutinize all his motives and actions. Many people are not able to detect their selfish motives because their minds are in a state of intoxication, turbidity and perversion.

Instead of jumping at once to enter into Samadhi and awakening Kundalini, aspirants should direct their attention and energy to the eradication of selfishness. They should practise introspection and self-analysis always and vigilantly scrutinise their motives in all actions and purify their motives. Then only success, in Yoga is possible.

9. LORD BUDDHA

"Return good for evil" was the doctrine which Lord Buddha constantly preached and practised. He was often heard to say: "If a man does me wrong, I will do him good in return; the more evil he does, the more good I will do to him; the fragrance of goodness comes to the person who

does good, and the harmful air of evil goes to the man who does evil.”

A fool, who had been told that Buddha professed and practised such a doctrine, came to him disgorged himself of a volley of abuse. The Lord remained smiling, pitying his folly.

When the man had finished his abuse Lord Buddha asked him: “Son, if a man refused to accept a present made to him, to whom would it go?” The fool answered, without understanding the implications of the Lord’s question: “In that case it would go back to the man who had offered it.”

“My son,” said Buddha, “You have abused me but I decline to accept your abuse. Please keep it yourself.”

“Will it not be a source of pain and misery to you?” continued Buddha. “The echo belongs to the sound and the shadow to the substance; in the same way misery must be the lot of the evil-doer.”

The fool made no reply, and the Lord continued: “A wicked person who abuses a virtuous person is like the one who attempts to spit at heaven; the spittle soils not the heaven, but comes back to the person who made the attempt and soils his own person. The abuser is like the one who flings dust at another, when the wind is contrary; the dust does and must return to the

person who threw it. The virtuous man remains unhurt, and the misery that the other would inflict on him comes back to the evil-doer himself.”

10. TWO NAMBU DIRIS

Nambudiris are Brahmins of Malabar. They are well-versed in Sanskrit. Sri Sankara was born in the Nambudiri family. Two Nambudiris began to bet one day for eating a bunch of bananas. Govind said to Krishna: “If you can eat this whole bunch of plantains with the skin I shall give you one hundred rupees.” Krishna was very much tempted by the prize of one hundred rupees. He agreed to eat the bunch of bananas with skin. The work started. Krishna removed the skin first from the fruits. A doubt arose in his mind whether to eat the skin first or fruit first. Anyhow he resolved to take the skin first. He finished the whole lot. His stomach became quite full. There was not an inch of space for the entry of even a single fruit. He told Govind: “Govind, I am defeated now. My stomach is full. I cannot eat the fruits.” Govind slowly ate the fruits himself which were kept ready by Krishna, and enjoyed them nicely. He enjoyed the fun also to his heart’s content. He pitied at the poor lot of Krishna and said to Krishna: “O Krishna, you were unwise. Had you eaten the fruits first, at least you would have enjoyed them, even if you failed to get the prize of one hundred

rupees. Now you lost both. How foolish you are! What is to be done now?"

The worldly-minded people share the lot of poor Krishna. They have no idea of the undecaying eternal spiritual Bliss of the Self within. They taste the little, false, illusory sensual pleasures, the skin of the banana-fruit, for a few seconds like Krishna, and pass away from this world, without tasting the perennial joy of their own Atma and win the prize of Immortality or Liberation from births and deaths. They undergo various sorts of miseries, sorrows, pains, and tribulations to enjoy this little, false Mayaic sensual pleasure. What a miserable condition! What a lamentable state!!

11. JIVA AND KARMAS

There was a rich man in a city. Two young boys, Gopal and Govind, lived with him. They did willingly whatever works the rich man commanded them to do. Although they served the rich man to his entire satisfaction, he did not pay them any wages. They lived on what they had saved previously.

One day the rich man took away all his property and disappeared. The two boys crossed the seas and went to an island to earn their daily bread. They went to a landlord and narrated their previous life history. The landlord gave them two

houses, ten cows and two plots of land and said: "Dear boys, live happily now." The two boys lived separately. The nature and life of each boy was quite different. Gopal lived on cow's milk. He distributed the balance of milk to his neighbours and guests. He ploughed the plot of land, planted nice fruit-bearing trees of all sorts and watered them well. In the course of some years they all yielded nice fruits. He ate them to his heart's content and distributed them to his friends, guests and neighbours. He thus led a nice, happy life.

The other boy, Govind, joined with bad companions and began to steal other's property. Sometimes he was beaten severely when he was caught by the people. He had a paddy field. He had a good harvest of paddy. But he kept the whole stock for himself. He never distributed it to his friends or neighbours. He was very selfish, greedy and rude. He planted trees which gave bitter fruits. He ate them.

The landlord called Gopal and said to him: "Dear Gopal! I am the landlord who disappeared with the property from you previously. I took a boat one night and came to this island. You also have come to this island. Though you are not able to recognise me, I have recognised you both. I gave you cows, houses and plots of land for the services rendered by you. I wished to know the nature,

temperament and habits of you both and so I asked you to live separately. Now you can live with me. You are a good-natured, serviceable boy. Your friend is a naughty boy. He is doing many wicked deeds. Let him remain alone." The landlord kept the boy with him. He also became a landlord.

The other boy, Govind, came to know that his friend had become a landlord. He thought that he also should become like his friend. So he abandoned his old evil habits and sought the company of good people. In course of time, he also became a good-natured boy.

The rich man represents God. The two boys represent the Jivas with good tendencies and bad tendencies. Jivas do virtuous and vicious actions in this world. This is compared to the services done by the boys for the rich man. The boys did not get their wages from the rich man. This illustrates that the Jivas cannot enjoy in this birth the fruits of actions done in this birth. The boys lived on what they had saved previously. This indicates that they enjoyed in this birth the fruits of their actions in their previous birth. The Jivas are not able to grasp the nature of God, the dispenser of fruits of actions when they begin to enquire: "Who dispenses the fruits of actions?" This is compared to the disappearance of the rich man on one day.

They crossed the sea and reached an island. This represents that the Jiva leaves this body and takes another body. The rich man gave to the boys, houses and cows. This is compared to the God's dispensing of fruits in this birth for the actions done by the Jivas in the previous birth in the form of physical body and sensual objects. The boys lived with the help of cows. This is compared to the Jivas enjoying pleasure and pain through this body, mind and the senses.

The good boy who ploughed the field, planted fruit-bearing trees, watered them and distributed the fruits and milk to his neighbours, guests, etc., Represent the good-natured Jiva with good tendencies (Shubha Vasanas), who purifies his mind through selfless service, sows the seed of devotion in his mind, waters the field of Antahkarana with the water of enquiry of Shastras, removes the weeds of evil tendencies and evil Vrittis, allows the tree of Brahmakara Vritti to grow, eats the fruit of Atmic Bliss, makes others also eat the fruits through his instructions to others and eventually becomes identical with Brahman, i.e., attains Self-realisation. Thus he became the landlord, i.e. he became Brahman Himself. Govind eats bitter fruits and does vicious actions and suffers. This means that the evil natured Jiva with evil Vasanas (Ashubha Vasanas) and evil Vrittis nurtures the trees of lust and anger and injures others and tastes the fruits

of sensual pleasures and destroys himself, through ignorance and want of knowledge of the Self.

The evil-minded boy Govind stored the paddy for himself. This means that he did several kinds of Karmas and stored the Sanchit Karmas for fructification in the future births. He heard the state of affairs of his friend and tried to become like him. This means that he heard from the scriptures and sages the nature of Brahman, and wished to attain Moksha.

He stopped doing evil actions, had Satsanga with Mahatmas and through them acquired the four means of salvation, Viveka, Vairagya, Shat Sampat and Mumukshutwa, practised constant meditation and attained oneness with Atma or Atma-Sakshatkara.

12. KARMAS AND DREAMS

In Benares there lived a great Mahatma by name Swami Vishuddhananda. His name spread far and wide. The Rajah of Benares used to go to him for Satsanga very frequently.

The Rajah dreamt one day that he was a scavenger. One day he went to the forest for hunting in a very simple dress. There was a small village in the forest. One scavenger of the village said to the Rajah in great joy: "Brother, come to our house. You died day before yesterday. I buried

you. Now you have come back. I am very fortunate in having you again in our midst. God has shown His mercy and grace on me. How did you manage to come back?"

The Rajah was struck with great wonder. The face of the Rajah exactly resembled that of the brother of the scavenger. That is the reason why the scavenger took the Rajah for his brother. The Rajah said: "I am not your brother." Then they went to the burial ground and saw the dead body of the brother of the scavenger.

The Rajah returned back to Benares. He narrated the whole story to the great Swami Vishuddhananda and the dream he dreamt. The Swamiji said: "O Rajan! You ought to take the birth of a scavenger in the next birth. Through Satsanga, Tapas and meditation you escaped from such a birth. Anyhow you exhausted the Karma in your dream by assuming the form of a scavenger." Even in dreams Karmas can be purged out and exhausted.

13. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin was a very poor boy. He was very fond of reading ever since he was a child. He spent all the money that came into his hands on books. He used to sell the books after reading them in order to buy new books to satisfy his deep craving for knowledge. He used to borrow books.

You will find in the book "Memoirs of the Life of Benjamin Franklin:" "I was very careful to return soon and clean these borrowed books. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and had to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted."

He educated himself with great effort and discipline. He read. He practised meditation. He gave up meat and subsisted on boiled potatoes, rice, "hasty pudding" which Tyron's books taught him to prepare. For lunch he took a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry cook's and a glass of water. He found that his progress was rapid and that he had acquired a greater clearness of head. He was a poet also. His growth and education were remarkable and full of innumerable vicissitudes. He passed through several stages of mental conflict and spiritual struggle but throughout the battle of life he maintained integrity of character and an unshakable purpose. These were the earliest traits in the character of one who became a celebrated man of Science, the complete citizen of his city, his country and the world and a man of character.

Benjamin affords the illustrious example of those who have laid down a routine of daily work and most faithfully followed it. The routine is very

instructive. Everyone of you should prepare a daily routine according to the conditions of your life, surroundings, capacity and strength and should regulate your life accordingly. You will be immensely benefited. One of the most interesting efforts made by Benjamin was towards the moulding of his own character. He drew up a chart of morals for himself which he strove to follow rigorously. He selected 13 virtues and allotted one week to the practice of each virtue in that particular week but he was not unmindful of the other virtues. He made a small notebook and he set apart a page for each virtue. He ruled each page with red ink and had seven columns one for each day of the week. He crossed these columns with 13 red lines thus making 13 columns for 13 virtues. He wrote down each virtue in each column. He would mark with a black spot in its proper column every fault he found upon self-examination to have been committed on that day regarding the virtue. Gradually he removed all his defects and developed these positive virtues.

Benjamin found pride the most difficult to conquer. In his own words "Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility."

The benefits of keeping a diary are incalculable; Self-analysis or self-examination should be made by you daily at night before retiring to bed. The spiritual diary is your best teacher and guide. It is an eye-opener. It is a whip for the mind. All your defects will be eradicated. The mind will come gradually under your control. This system should be followed by everyone.

14. STORY OF KALI

Kali appeared before Raja Parikshit. The Raja said to him: "O Kali! There is no place for you in my dominion. You must leave my territory immediately." Kali was very much grieved on hearing the words of the Raja. He said: "O Rajan, do not be so cruel towards me. Thou art an embodiment of mercy and righteousness. Be merciful. Where can I go? Give me some sort of shelter in your dominion." Then Raja Parikshit gave four places to Kali: (1) the gambling table, (2) the slaughtering place where animals are killed, (3) the place where sisters of ill-fame live, (4) the place where people drink intoxicating liquors. Then Kali said to the Raja: "O Rajan, it will be difficult for me to reside in so many places at the same time. Be pleased to give me one place where all these will be found together." The Raja pondered for three or four days and then said: "O

Kali, I have found out a very nice place for you. You will be immensely pleased now to have that place. The Raja presented a ball of gold to Kali and said: "Take your abode in money, you will find all the above four and one more element also in addition, viz. enmity."

Kali said: "O merciful Raja! Well said! I am really very happy now. I can work wonders now with money. How kind you are! I will bring thousands of people in my clutches. I will make them quite restless. I will create daily quarrels among them. I will delude all worldly-minded people. I will make them drink liquors. I will induce them to spend their whole money in gambling and thus I will make them beggars. I will make them meat-eaters and increase their animal passion."

Artha (wealth) is Anartha (evil). Wealth is at the root of all evils. It produces intoxication in the mind. It generates pride. It makes a man forget God. Rich people are stone-hearted. Lord Jesus says: "It is easier for a camel to enter the hole of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. "Wealth can never be accumulated without injuring and deceiving others. Wealth begets various vices. That poor pious man, who worships God though he is clad in rags, though he has

nothing to eat, is the most wealthy man in the whole world. He is very dear to the Lord. Spiritual wealth is the real wealth. It is eternal. It cannot be plundered by dacoits. Therefore obtain this imperishable spiritual wealth and move about happily. Now Kali will not dare to touch you. Lord Yama will not dare to entrap you.



Sri Swami Sivananda, in his great love and compassion, left no stone unturned in order to wake up slumbering mankind. In his own time he did it through personal contact or letters, by teaching, by giving, through love and through humour. However, for those who would come after his Maha-samadhi he did it by writing books on the highest philosophical topics like the Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma-sutras. But he also wrote his wisdom in stories, plays and poems: they appeal to the heart, and the truth contained therein inspires instantly and spontaneously.

This little book, 'Philosophical Stories', saw the light of day in 1939 and had its second edition in 1945. Now after 68 years the third edition is appearing for the joy, reflection and benefit of all of us.



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