

On Goals, Generosity and God

- Pujya K.C. Narayana

Many aspirants have been feeling some difficulty or the other in setting their goals in life. Modern life can be deeply stressful and confusing because of its total lack of clarity regarding the goals of life and the complexity consequent to the same. Like a maze with too many directions, life fosters anxiety because it is difficult to know which way to go. We can chart our course only if we can accommodate a place for God and Good.

Any goal for that matter first of all defines the direction of ones' movement. It gathers our energy, and cuts through an enormous amount of distraction. They relieve stress because they provide a conduit for wholesome, positive action.

All the research in the field of motivation informs us that inaction fuels helplessness, as against the common notion that helplessness fuels inaction. This generates the worst kinds of stressful states of mind: desperation and despondency. We become trapped, in habit patterns of negative thinking, blind to

opportunities, victimized by an exaggerated perception of powerlessness. Setting goals helps reverse these conditions. By defining targets and taking small, and yet consistent steps towards them, we clear a path strewn with thorough complexity. Thus we instead of being stuck, we become empowered.

Of course there is much more to life than setting and achieving goals which mark us as successful in life. But Life can be shallow and self-centered if it lacks an expansive connection to the infinite creative presence known as God (Goddess, Brahman, Buddha, Christ, Allah, Life, Being, Spirit).

When we unite ourselves with a loving, all-inclusive God, we are lit from within. However God is not all that easy a form to conceive and abide in. This is sought to be resolved by us in this system (PAM) by taking Master in the place of God for our purposes. We no longer feel driven to define ourselves by approval or results. We build a consciousness that can move with equanimity through frustration, fear, and pain.

When goals become partnered with awakening to God/Master, it yields a process that may be called “true

goal-setting.” True goal-setting is a tool much more than simple acquisition of things and management of life’s confusions. When goal-setting is spiritualized, results are not the main focus; it is the process we care about. Through the process, we grow, learn, and awaken.

How do we manage to set our Spiritual Goals is a question that may appear difficult to answer. But the qualities of compassion and non injury as far as I know are the keys for setting spiritual goals. One of the most wonderful abodes in the higher states of

Consciousness is rejoicing in other peoples' success. This quality however has been defined in traditional books, negatively as non jealousy. Rejoice is far more happier state than non jealousy is what we learn in spiritual life. Equanimity the highest mount in the higher states of consciousness is the master key to open any gate to heavenly abodes.

The more these stations in sadhana materialise, the more happiness we experience. Stress has no room to take root. Spiritual goal-setting provides a wonderful opportunity for cultivating the heavenly abodes.

This is cultivated by simple act of generosity. It may

appear odd when it is stated that the driving energy behind spiritual goal-setting is generosity. This action of generosity has two aspects: Dana and Dharma. If a person assiduously practices these virtues, the heavenly abodes mentioned above come within his reach. Dana is what is given to the eligible persons or institutions for the welfare of the society at the appropriate time. Dharma is what is given to the needy. Both these acts should end not with a feeling of having done something but with an explicit expression through acts and words that we have not been able to do much more.

It is necessary that we should commit ourselves to the goal and this may either be an explicit declaration to the group (family) or a noting in the diary of the person. It is obvious the goals we set for ourselves are measurable. We need to make our goal as specific as possible so that we will know when it is achieved. It should also have an end date or condition. Constant evaluation of our achievement with reference to the goal is one of the most potent factors in realising higher degrees of motivation. I would prefer to define the goal as a dream with a dead line.

To make my point more clear I would suggest that we make our act of Generosity well defined.

Ex:-

1. I am expecting a promotion in my job. I shall donate at least 10% of the same I shall donate to the institutions catering to the needs of less privileged children in educational institutions.

2. I am performing the marriage of my son/daughter. On this auspicious occasion I shall offer Rs. 1001 for the religious institution performing the marriage.

3. I am purchasing a car for the family; I shall arrange to help the neighbourhood with a merry go round for the kids to play.

4. I commit myself for getting up early to do morning meditation as prescribed for a month. After successful completion of this period of commitment I shall help the Institute in organising the training programme and commit myself for a further period of 3 months.

Many such examples would be striking the readers.

By this type of extending our goal into charitable action, we fuel our enthusiasm for achieving it. Each act of charity brings us happiness in three ways:

1. The pleasure of the planning
2. The joy of actually doing it

3. The warmth of the memory.

Generosity is a delight and a relief. Through generosity, the uptight, demanding energy or stress we sometimes bring to our work area or projects is either expelled or never really has a chance to develop.

One may question the logic of generosity by saying that we work to support our family and our whole life is spent on this only which is nothing else but generous action. What is suggested through generous action above is only an extension of the goals we have rather than any Herculean effort at sacrifice etcetera. It is an extension that promotes joy and which we care to do for the pleasure it grants.

For example, we may be burdened with “daily grind” responsibilities that we feel emotionally and spiritually empty. We in all fairness may be feeling that we should be careful not to squander what little energy we are left with at the end of the day. The most wise counsel I have ever come across is to know that energy and happiness grow from sharing, not hoarding.

We need to empty our cup so that it may be filled again.

This is accomplished by acts of conscious, open-handed generosity. It may be challenging to get started, but I think there is no other lesson more important to learn.

When the thought of offering the prayer at 9 P.M. arises in my mind, I wonder the excellent manner in which the principle of Generosity was built into it by our Great Master. We offer the prayer in such a way that all the people in the world are benefited. We are asked to think that all are our brethren and that every one is moving towards the Master with Love and Devotion.

Prayer has always been acclaimed as the most potent tool we have to have connection with the Divine. It is necessary that we always include quiet time for meditation or prayer in order to realise our goal. We should start and end our day with the spiritual practice as advised. It will help transform a potentially self-centered effort into an open-hearted, creative sharing of universal harmony and abundance. This is what may be described as realisation or enlightenment in a practical manner.