

My dear brothers and sisters, Pranams to all.

On this auspicious occasion of Basant Panchami, on the eve of Pujya Lalaji Maharaj's 154th era celebration, I offer my respects and humble Pranams to the Masters of our lineage.

May this paper serve as a sincere attempt to explore and share the profound teachings at the heart of Babuji Maharaj's message: **"In comparison to Reality, we are but a drop in the ocean of Almighty and somehow we should try to become a river from the drop."**

On April 30, 1980, during His 81st birthday celebration in Delhi, Pujya Babuji Maharaj gave voice to this metaphor. What strikes me each time I read it is not just its poetry, but its precision. He is not offering mere inspiration or sentiment. He is describing something real about consciousness, about the journey itself.

"In comparison to Reality, we are but a drop in the ocean of Almighty and somehow we should try to become a river from the drop."

The paradox is immediate and inescapable. How can a drop—already separate, already formed—become a river? And yet, somehow, that is exactly what the spiritual path demands of us.

When I first encountered this teaching, I confess I was confused. My mind wanted to resolve the paradox too quickly. Either the drop remains a drop, or it dissolves into the ocean. Becoming a river seemed to split the difference in a way that felt philosophically untidy. But years of practice have shown me something different. The paradox is not a problem to be solved. It is an invitation to transcend the either-or thinking that has imprisoned us.

Understanding Our Present Condition: The Drop

The concept of “drop” and “river” in Babuji's teaching is not a poetic fancy. It is an accurate description of the human condition as it is actually lived.

The Sensory Prison

We are locked in. Every moment, consciousness is confined to what the five senses report and what the mind can process. We measure reality by what we see, hear, touch, taste, smell—by what we feel in our bodies and think in our heads.

Babuji puts it starkly: **"The irony of fate is that we do not see the THING behind the things. Hence we measure the consciousness from our outward experience."**

I experience this confinement directly. When I initially started my meditational practice, the habitual pull toward sensory reference points is constant. My practice shows me that consciousness is almost magnetized toward the outer. We are like someone trying to understand the vastness of the ocean by studying a single drop—our perspective is impossibly small, yet we don't realize it.

Identity with Body and Mind

But the prison is not just sensory. We are utterly convinced that we *are* the body, the thoughts, the emotions. This is not a belief we hold consciously. It is much more fundamental. It is the fish in water swimming without noticing.

I remember a moment in early practice when I suddenly observed a thought arise and pass. For just an instant, there was a gap—I was aware of the thought, but I was not the thought. That separation lasted perhaps a second, but it changed something. Because suddenly, the ordinary assumption—that **I am my thoughts**—revealed itself as an assumption. I had taken it for truth my entire life.

Pujya Babuji calls this condition as soiled Individuality —an individuality colored by attachments, aversions, and the deep conviction of separation from the Divine Source. It is not a moral failing. It is the default state of human consciousness until something shifts.

The Whip of Thoughts and Actions

Pujya Babuji speaks of being beaten by "**the whip of thoughts and actions, which cause uneasiness and tension.**" When I first read this, I thought it was poetic exaggeration. But it is not. It is deeper observation.

Our minds generate an endless stream of thoughts—most of them recycled, repetitive, anxious, desiring, fearful. These thoughts are not light. They are heavy. They have texture. They accumulate. Pujya Sri K.C. Narayana describes it beautifully:

"Recurring thoughts are strong patterns of energy. So they naturally create some sort of matter. And any matter is a form. Thus the thoughts which were once felt as a mist becomes deep and heavy like fog."

This is not a metaphor. This is a description. Anyone who has sat in meditation knows this. The mental fog is real. It weighs. It binds.

The Vision of the Possible: The River

Yet the metaphor does not remain trapped in limitation. Our Master offers a vision of what is possible. The river.

Unlike the drop—isolated, stagnant, self-contained—the river **moves**. It **flows**. It carries life. It nourishes. It serves.

But here is the crucial point: the river is not the ocean. The river remains the river. It maintains its individual form, its specific course, its particular character. And yet, simultaneously, it has become something larger than drop. It has become a vehicle for something far greater than itself.

This is the paradox resolved—not intellectually but experientially. Not by conceptual argument but by lived transformation.

The Four Qualities of the River State

In the Natural Path tradition, this expanded consciousness is characterized by four essential qualities:

1. **Movement and Dynamism:** The river never settles. It is never stagnant. It represents consciousness perpetually flowing toward the ocean (Divine)—not stuck in fixed ideas or rigid patterns of belief.

2. Expansion and Inclusivity: The river encompasses infinitely more than the drop. As we grow spiritually, our circle of care expands. What we once saw as separate—other people, nature, creation—we recognize as interconnected, interdependent. My practice shows me this gradually. I notice I am less quick to judge, more able to hold complexity. The world feels less like "me" and "them" and more like a living whole.

3. Service and Transmission: This is not service as we typically understand it—something I do out of duty or morality. Rather, as the river naturally nourishes the lands it touches without deliberation or calculation, the spiritually expanded person becomes a channel of grace. Service flows as naturally as water flows downhill.

4. Connection to Source: The river maintains unbroken continuity with its source in the mountains and its destination in the ocean. The river does not forget where it came from. Similarly, expanded consciousness never loses connection to the Divine Source. This connection is the ground of the entire journey.

A Living Illustration: The Sacred Ganges

I am reminded of the sacred river Ganges. According to our mythology, Ganges is divine essence—the ocean itself in celestial form. Yet she chose to descent. She came down through the matted locks of Lord Shiva to serve on earth. She carries purification and blessing to millions. Yet throughout her journey, she never forgets her source or her ultimate destination. She flows toward merger even as she serves.

This is the drop-to-river teaching made visible. The Ganges in her descent becomes limited, yes. But she chooses this limitation to serve. In her choice to serve, she neither loses her essential divine nature nor her unbroken connection to her source. She is the embodiment of the river principle in action.

The Central Question: How Does Transformation Happen?

Here we arrive at what is for me the most important part of Babuji's teaching.

The question is simple but fundamental: **How does the individual drop expand into a river?**

And Babuji's answer is radical: Individual effort alone is insufficient.

I must sit with this because my mind resists it. I want to believe in my own capacity for self-transformation through discipline and will. But Babuji points to something I have come to recognize through practice: the individual mind is trapped in its own patterns. The very instrument I would use to free myself is already bounded itself.

Pujya Dr. K.C.V explained with clarity:

"The mind that has come to the lowest end and is in suffering must turn back to get at the source of purity itself. Now Master says at this point, it cannot be done with your own efforts, but only a Divine personality can help you to connect your lower end with your own higher end, because you have created so many barriers to your own flexibility."

(Complete works of Dr. K.C.V. Vol.1, Page 206)

This recognition has been humbling and liberating. Humbling because it means acknowledging my fundamental incapacity. Liberating because it means help is available. Not as a reward for perfect effort, but as grace offered to the sincere seeker.

The Path of Grace: Pranahuti

Babuji calls this help **Pranahuti**—Divine Transmission or Divine Effulgence. It is what makes the natural path not just a path of effort, but a Path of Grace.

How Pranahuti Works: Four Essential Mechanisms

1. Supporting Individual Effort: Pranahuti is not a replacement for practice. Rather, it acts like a current in water. By itself, the current cannot make the drop move. But a drop placed in a moving current will move. Our practice creates the container; the Master's transmission provides the dynamic force.

I have experienced this directly in meditation. Some sessions, my practice feels dry, effortful, mechanical. Other sessions, something shifts. There is a palpable shift in energy, a deepening I cannot generate through my own will. This is not my imagination or self-suggestion. The difference is tangible.

2. Purification: To become a river, the drop must be cleansed of accumulated impurities—the mental and emotional impressions that weigh consciousness down.

Through Pranahuti-aided meditation, particularly meditation on **Points A and B** in the heart region, and through the cleaning practices, the vital body is gradually purified. We experience:

- Cleaning of sensual cravings and the bestial propensities that trap us
- Gradual regulation of the unruly mind and senses as consciousness naturally rises
- Progressive lightening of the burden of mental impressions (samskaras) that have accumulated since birth

This too is not abstract. In practice, I notice deeper relaxation, fewer intrusive thoughts, a lightness that has nothing to do with mood and everything to do with the actual lightening of burden.

3. Structured Navigation. The journey from drop to river is not vague or undefined. It has structure. A Road Map with specificity.

Babuji describes this journey through what are called the 13 knots (granthi), beginning from the heart center (Anahata) and ascending through the spinal regions to the crown center (Occipital). (“The Path of Grace” & “Towards Infinity”)

At each knot, the consciousness progresses through four stages (The Path of Grace, Page # 279):

- *Salokya*: Attaining the same realm
- *Sameepya*: Attaining proximity
- *Sarupya*: Attaining similarity in form and nature
- *Sayujya*: Attaining complete merger and union

This is not theory invented in isolation. Practitioners report experiences that map precisely onto this structure. The specificity of the map both guides and validates the journey.

Complementing this is the understanding of 23 concentric circles (vrittis) surrounding the consciousness. The outermost circles represent grosser states (matter, illusion, egoism), while inner circles represent progressively subtle states. The journey from drop to river is simultaneously a movement from the outermost circles toward the center—the point of pure consciousness where the drop merges with the ocean.

4. Transformation of Perspective: Ultimately, Pranahuti shifts consciousness from "self" to "Non-Self." This is Babuji's paradoxical description of the highest state: "**Life without life.**"

It is not annihilation in the ordinary sense. It is not blank emptiness. Rather, it is transcendence of the limited sense of "I am" into recognition of ultimate reality. Pujya Babuji describes it:

"If we deal it spiritually, then 'to be' has the sense of 'self'. If we want to go into 'Non-Self' then we will have to annihilate 'to be' in thought, and will come to 'not to be' in its real sense. It means the 'Life without life'—i.e., 'we are and we are not' as also 'we are not and we are'."

As I understand; this shift does not happen through intellectual understanding. It happens through certain conditions or states of consciousness—Faith, Constant Remembrance, and Self-Surrender—which arise naturally as practice deepens. These are not things we do. They are results that dawn upon us as consciousness evolves.

The Role of Practice: Watering the Seed

While Pranahuti provides the transmission, practice is not rendered unnecessary. Rather, our sincere effort becomes a channel for grace.

Pujya Babuji states it clearly: ("Remembrance", Satyapadamu, Dec '2018)

"In our sanstha, the reality is infused into the abhyasi at the first stroke. It serves as a seed for further growth which, under the watchful eye of the master, goes on developing. But it remains for you to keep on watering it by your constant remembrance which is the only instrument to ensure speedy progress in spirituality."

I experience this as the essential partnership. The grace comes first—the seed is infused. But I must water it. The watering is not arduous practice or harsh discipline. It is constant remembrance. It is maintaining awareness and connection. It is the sincerity of return.

Service as the Natural Expression of Expansion

As the drop becomes a river, something remarkable happens. Service is no longer something I decide to do out of principle or duty. It flows naturally from the expansion itself.

Babuji says:

"I have developed a liking for service to others, and so, I always seek the better means for the service of those who are beaten by the whip of thoughts and actions." ("Love him Who Loves All")

Notice the shift. It is not "I have committed myself to serve" or "I believe I should serve." It is "I have developed a liking for service." The commitment has become preference. The practice has become nature.

In my own practice, I notice this gradual shift. Years ago, service felt like obligation—something I should do. Now, when I encounter someone's suffering or limitation, the impulse to help arises naturally. It does not feel like virtue. It feels like water flowing downhill. The river does not contemplate whether to serve the lands it passes. It serves by its nature.

The Heart of It All: Love

At the center of this entire teaching lies a principle that Babuji has defined in a most unusual way.

Most of us understand love as emotion—affection, tenderness, romantic attraction. But Babuji says something radically different:

"Love is the hunger of human soul for divine beauty, according to Socrates and Love is the inner awakening to Reality according to me."

Love, in this understanding, is not sentiment. It is the fundamental orientation of the soul toward its source. It is the gravitational force that pulls the drop toward the ocean, the river toward its source. It is the very essence of the journey itself.

The entire teaching culminates in Babuji's instruction:

"Love Him who loves all, and thus everybody is automatically loved through Him."

This is extraordinary wisdom. By directing love toward the Source—toward the Divine, the Ocean, the Infinite—one automatically holds all creation in compassion. The love is not diminished or divided. Through the central love, all beings are held.

This love cannot be generated through effort. It arises naturally as consciousness expands. As the drop recognizes itself as part of the ocean, as the river recognizes its source, love naturally awakens—not as sentiment but as the deepest recognition of fundamental unity.

The Journey Itself

Babuji's teaching offers a comprehensive vision of the spiritual journey:

First - Where we begin: As drops—limited, separate, burdened by mental impressions and identification with the body-mind.

Second - What is possible: The vision of becoming a river—expanded consciousness that maintains individual functionality while serving all creation.

Third - How transformation happens: Through the Natural Path combining Divine Transmission (Pranahuti), sincere practice, constant remembrance, purification, and progressive surrender to the Master's guidance.

Fourth - The ultimate goal: Reaching the ocean while remaining the river—realizing one's infinite nature while maintaining the capacity to serve.

The transformation is characterized by:

- Not ego expansion, but consciousness expansion
- Not personal power, but becoming a vehicle for Divine grace
- Not accumulation, but distribution and service
- Not static achievement, but dynamic flow toward the source

A Final Word

When I sit with this teaching now, what moves me most is not its intellectual beauty—though it has that—but its fundamental compassion.

Pujya Babuji acknowledges our real limitation. We are drops. We are small. We are bound. We are suffering under the whip of our own thoughts and conditioning.

And simultaneously, He affirms our infinite potential. Within each drop is the capacity to become a river. Within each river is the essence of the ocean.

This is neither harsh judgment nor false encouragement. It is precise recognition of our actual situation—and equally precise recognition of our actual possibility.

The drop does not need to despair. Within it already flows the potential of the ocean. This potential does not need to be created. It needs only to be realized—actualized through sincere practice, the grace of the Master, and the constant remembrance that we are not abandoned, but supported at every step.

As Babuji says:

"Finally love makes every task easy and paves the way for the shower of Masters grace to smoothen the way to the Ultimate Goal. Love Him who loves all, and thus everybody is automatically loved through Him. Amen."

This is the journey. From drop to river to ocean. The eternal path of human consciousness toward its ultimate realization and infinite service to all creation.

Pranams.

References

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