

Seminar paper on “As you think, so you become” (SDG 62)

- by Dharmesh Shah

Heartfelt gratitude to the Master for enabling us to meet again virtually through the seminar. Humble pranams to all the co-travellers on the path and seekers of Reality – God – Ultimate – Realization.

The sentence of the seminar seems pretty simple and the secret to achieving our Goal. However, first let's look at it and see if it is really that simple.

Do you think there are many people in world who think, “I want to be unhappy?” Everyone in the world thinks that, “I want to be Happy.” But the question is, “Is that so?” We see miseries all around and people under stress, tension, worry and confusion.

Most of the spiritual systems and religions talk about reaching God and/or Realization and each one prescribe methods related to moulding our thinking that way. Some people who claim to that they have realized God, are going after money, property, name, fame etc.

As we ponder over “As you think, so you become”, we wonder, “Is that so?”

On the surface looks like everyone is following but only few are getting the result. Hence, we need to understand from the Master's perspective the depth behind this sentence then only we will get the result. Let me share my perspective.

In the chapter ‘The Subtlest Method’, the Master says, “*God is simple, and the method followed to achieve Him is also simple and straight. Thought when purely Divine will never fail to reach source. If corrupted with attributes and qualities, Realisation also becomes corrupted and degraded. Gross methods give grosser results.*” Hence rather than seeing the thought at the surface we need to go deeper at subconscious levels and see, “Are our thoughts purely Divine or corrupted and degraded?”

When Pujya Sir (Shri K. C. Narayana) was not keeping well, I went to his place for inquiring about his health and few other people were sitting there. Seeing me, Pujya Sir nodded his head asking to sit, as I sat there and there was silence. Suddenly Pujya Sir looks at everyone and asks “How many people really want the Ultimate – God? I am talking about the abhyasis and not everyone.” Then He only answered “Very few.” This was lot of dose for me in a day and felt the serious need to introspect. Let me share how I introspected, making it more generic.

Starting with the Goal – Commandment 3 – “Fix up your Goal which should be Complete Oneness with God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved” In Hindi it is more elaborate,

“हर एक भाई को चाहिये कि अपना मकसद कायम कर ले, और वो ये कि ईश्वर तक पहुँच कर उसमें लयावस्था हासिल करके शाश्वत स्थान प्राप्त कर ले और जब तक ये बात हासिल न हो जाये, चैन न आवे।”

i.e. reach the condition of God, achieve oneness and permanency in the condition.

So with complete openness and without prejudice go inside yourself and answer these 3 questions:

1. What is my current concept of God? (Is it some form or formless, saguna or nirguna? which form, which attributes)
2. Where is that understanding coming from?
3. Do I really want to have Oneness with it?

The answer for the 1st & 2nd question for me has been changing in the initial years of the sadhana. Here one needs to be clear about their concept of God and it is not corrupted with attributes and qualities. Answer to the 3rd question has been changing from “No” to “May be” to “Yes but ..., ..., ... or along with ..., ..., ... and ...” and the list of things along which I am not willing to give up on reducing as well as increasing as I understand my true condition along with bindings and attachments.

Real answers to all the above questions were obviously not to the liking, but that was the fact. This really helped me to correct the situation and I still keep doing that once a year at least.

He starts the commentary on Commandment 3 saying, *“It is very essential for everyone to fix his thought, at the very outset, upon the goal which he has to attain so that his thought and will may pave his way up to it. It has been observed that those on the path of spirituality who did not fix that final state for their goal have definitely remained short of the mark, because, before arriving at the final point, they mistook one or the other of the intermediate states to be the final point or the Reality, and stopped there. Thus they suffered merely for not having fixed their goal.”* (BWS p.133) So this is a prerequisite if we want to really reach the Goal.

Now, you can evaluate your answers about the understanding of the Goal and how firmly you have fixed your Goal, as the result will depend on it because, *“As you think, so you become.”*

Coming to the method, Master says, *“Meditation on the simple, pure and Ultimate alone can save man in his crisis. This surely makes him more and more simple, bringing him closer and closer to the Original Home. As you think, so you become. There should be the subtlest method to realise the subtlest Being. There should be one method, one Master and one God. Of course, selection you will have to do yourself.”*

Here the object of meditation we have is the Divine Light or Light without luminosity and the meditation is on the heart. So we are meditating on the subtlest object which is simple – Light, pure – Without luminosity and Ultimate – Divine. With some practice, I am sure that all of you have become somewhat simple and natural, which has increased your confidence that you are on the right path. Hence you are already following one method, one Master and one God.

The most important thing here is to meditate properly so as to get the benefit. Once after the Satsang, Dr. Madhava was sharing that Pujya Sir used to tell him that people do not meditate properly. Then he further explained, *“People are focused on ignoring thoughts rather than meditating on the Divine Light.”* At first, didn't understand, but after he explained in detail then understood that we are meditating on the Divine Light in the heart so our attention should be on it. Being unmindful of the thoughts will happen if we are focused on the Goal. So worrying and spending energy on ignoring of the thoughts is unnecessary and it is taking away our attention from the object of meditation. The difference is subtle but quite important. The other thing he mentioned was *“When you begin meditating in this way please think only that Godly light within is attracting you.”* (Intro to

PAM – p57) Both these things have really improved my quality of the meditation and the thought of Divine Light in the heart is more predominant throughout the meditation, in spite of other thoughts.

We all know that we are not aiming for thoughtless condition and the quality and intensity of the thoughts change as we progress. Pujya Sir says in the Meditation chapter, *“In meditation we bother to try to keep our attention on divine light only, ignoring all other thoughts. These thoughts relate to these Kosas and that is what I am trying to tell you. Don’t run away from that situation, face it – ignore it.”* (Liberal Exposition of PAM – p65) After explaining the all the Kosas in brief earlier in the chapter. At another place he says, *“It is the nature of such thought patterns that reveal to us our binds. In this context the nature of the thought reveals the Kosa that is binding us.”* (Kosas – p9)

Not just after the meditation but also we need to observe our thoughts, condition during the day as recommended by Pujya Babuji Maharaj in letter (dated 14th Dec 1955) to Pujya Dr. K.C.Varadachari writes, *“I think it will be greatly helpful to your progress if you devote a few minutes at intervals several times during the day to study your state of mind at the time and note it down so that it may not slip out of your memory and write to me date wise if you can spare time for it. The method is very beneficial and increases the speed of progress. It will help you a good deal to dispel all disturbing elements from your mind.”* (Event Horizon – p33)

Hence, for the serious sadhakas, it is really essential to understand these Kosas (Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya) and thought patterns related to it so as to know the ones that are binding us and the ones that are liberating us. The book ‘The Five Kosas – Role in Sadhana under Pranahuti Aided Meditation’, which is also in the Appendix I of ‘Path of Grace’ written by Pujya Sir explains the working of mind and Kosas in detail. From the book I’ve attempted to extract the characteristics, thought patterns and how do we come out of it for each Kosa, hoping that it helps everyone.

1. Annamaya Kosa: (Path of Grace – p297-311)

What are its key characteristics?

- We identify ourselves more naturally with the physical body when the Annamaya Kosa is the most predominant one in our thoughts. There are certain natural characteristics of the physical body that is an essentially a product of Earth and Water elements of Matter. Matter has a natural tendency for inertia and torpor. Our body left to its elements would seek rest.
- This is related with the Tamoguna (Tamas).
- As Pujya Dr. K.C.Varadachari puts it, *“We put the cart before the Horse”*

What are the thoughts and thought patterns related to this?

- Naturally identifying ourselves with the physical body and thoughts related to it e.g. thoughts related to keeping the body up-to-date or too much obsession to the body.
- Thought patterns that can neither resist demands of the body nor postpone them
- Thoughts related to food and being too conscious about it. When this is case the person is eating in the tension, fear and confusion e.g. eating this will lead to cholesterol or increase in weight. Not eating will make my Vitamin levels will go down.
- No aim in life and thought patterns of inertia and torpor
- Thoughts related to considering any work as an inevitable drudgery.

- Outlook to difficulties in life is apathy, passive indifferent resignation and many times only simple avoidance and escapism.

How to come out of it?

- 'Gird up our loins' and give priority to sadhana over all other activities.
- Self-discipline
- Regularly and properly doing Point A and Point B meditation
- Following Commandment 8 to its core especially while eating
- Properly doing Bed time Prayer and following Commandment 10

When do we know we are out of it?

- One can be considered to have got out of the clutches of Annamaya Kosa only when he does not have fear of death.

2. **Pranamaya Kosa:** (Path of Grace – p312 - 325)

What are its key characteristics?

- The Pranamaya Kosa or the vital sheath is the product of Rajoguna (Drive, Passion, Dynamism etc.)
- Prana is the life force in Matter and is the active principle operating in the field of torpor and inertia. It propels the Jiva (living being) to action and is also the source from which the energy emanates for self-preservation (called as Kama) and propagation (called as Krodha).
- Pranamaya Kosa has three functions,
 1. To sense external stimulate via the indriyas
 2. To form desires based on these sensations
 3. To perform actions through the motor organs.
- It controls the indriyas and the instincts and activates the body to fulfil the basic desires for food, sleep, sex and to react to danger through flight or fight.
- The persons suffering from the binds of Pranamaya Kosa have an identification with their impulses and emotions. They are usually scared of any ailments in their body or mind and paradoxically are those who suffer most in these areas because their view of life. Because of the active principle in them they may appear to be having control over Annamaya Kosa but in fact they are victims of both the Kosas.

What are the thoughts and thought patterns related to this?

- Governed by desires to achieve/ gain wealth, sex, power and progeny and giving explanations for such a pursuit.
- Giving reasons (rationalizations) for greed, exploitation, jealousy, treachery etc. and suggest for others.
- Work as the means for power, authority, exhibition of Pride and ego
- Fear related to ailments in the body or mind
- In case of difficulties attitude is war and struggle. As a result, they are most of the time in tension or anxiety. Irritability and aggressiveness that they entertain causes bodily and social problems for them.

How to come out of it?

- Regularly and properly doing Point A and Point B meditation
- Understanding dependency not only on humans but everything that exists in the Universe and always working for the good of all.
- The awareness that the whole existence is dependent in an organismic manner on God and development of reverential attitude to the Divine.
- **Yielding to the Divine in every sense of the term finally alone brings control over the Pranamaya Kosa.**

When do we know we are out of it?

- When Viveka and Vairagya are developed reasonably well
- The three fold awareness develops
 1. God is the real owner and enjoyer of everything in the Universe
 2. Therefore any possessive tendency and thereby enjoyment is not ethical
 3. All tendencies to enjoy the fruits of others (Gods) is wrong. Enjoying is by itself not wrong; only that it has to be known it is all God given.
- Likes and dislikes, attachments and detachments and repulsions and attractions (Raaga and Dvesha) lose their value. Then the relation one has for ones' thoughts are neither positive nor negative but neutral.

3. **Manomaya Kosa:** (Path of Grace – p325 - 343)

What are its key characteristics?

- The Manomaya Kosa consists of the mind and the five Jnanendriyas that have become the instruments of the mind. It means the subtle mind or in the language of Western Psychologists the 'Unconscious' part of our mind.
- It is responsible for the functions of 1) memory, 2) contemplation, 3) experience of pleasure and pain and 4) dreaming. This sphere of the mind is governed by the pleasure principle"
- The Manomaya Kosa may be considered for all purposes as the controller of our lower self.
- The Manomaya Kosa is responsible for most of the thinking and contemplation. It is the sphere of reasoning, logical thought and problem solving.
- **The Manomaya Kosa is the source from where we get power for rational thinking.**

What are the thoughts and thought patterns related to this?

- Irregularity/ avoidance in sadhana and giving flimsy reasons for it
- Non-acceptance of guides' instructions in sadhana
- Giving some reason or the other for the impulsive tendencies and the consequent action.
- Defending anger, lust, passion, jealousy, envy and host of other animal and quasi animal tendencies in us.
- Possessiveness in all fields (wealth, spouse, kids, job etc.).
- Justification of kama, krodha, moha, lobha and ahankar
- Self-pity and expectation of sympathetic treatment
- Justifying rituals, idol worship etc. as spiritual ways

- Tension due to non-satisfaction of desires

“This is the plane from where Satan works giving arguments for every wrong act and wrong thought”

How to come out of it?

- Regularly and properly doing Point A and Point B meditation
- One has to make a strict rule not to act according to the impulses of anger, ego or whatever the weakness maybe that one wants to get rid of.
- If one does act in the heat of the moment, it is necessary that one should not justify or persist in the action.
- Attending regular Individual Sittings

When do we know we are out of it?

“The Commandments of our Master are to be adopted fully if we are to control the odd ways of the Manomaya Kosa. The bondage due to this sheath is the toughest to get rid of. Therefore we have to understand the purpose and nature of his commandments.”

4. **Vijnanamaya Kosa:** (Path of Grace – p343 - 365)

What are its key characteristics?

- “Vijnanamaya Kosa is the ‘Sheath of cognition’. It is the vehicle of higher thought, understanding, knowing, direct cognition, wisdom, intuition and creativity partly covering the Upper (U) portion of heart.”
- “It is subtler than and pervades the former 3 sheaths (Kosas) and it controls them. The 5 senses are common to both the mental and intellectual sheaths, as perception involves both the mind and the intellect.”
- “In the Vijnanamaya Kosa we observe three layers of consciousness.
 - 1st layer: The desire for spiritual realization originates.
 - 2nd layer: Viveka & Vairagya - two of the most important intuitional qualities are expressed.
 - 3rd layer: This state grants us a feeling or awareness of “I” as the” Brahm. This layer is capable of grasping all existence in space and time.”
- Vijnanamaya Kosa is a product of Sattva Guna of the Prakrti reflecting perfectly as a mirror. It is not the Witness but the Self is the witness of this sheath. Being closest to the Atman, this sheath reflects the self the most.

What are the thought patterns related to this?

- Discontentment with the limitations of the lower planes of consciousness or bodies that seem to bind us and not allowing us to soar in the realm of love
- For addressing ourselves to this problem we take and stick to the path of meditation
- I am competent and perfect, don’t need anyone’s help
- I am entitled for the progress because of my competency
- Thinking of self as knowledgeable and keep arguing with others to own point of view

Problems related to Vijnanamaya Kosa

- Intellectual Sarira (Vijnanamaya Kosa) can present a view as though it is perfect and may lead us to argue with others and challenge their points of view. Both the persons in the debate are equally in illusion as they are fighting over what their intellect mirrored.
- Due to the intellectual pride, not read or hear the Masters often and not to contemplate on them. Wisdom never grants pride, it is the Intellect. Most of the persons who think themselves erudite or learned suffer from this and thus get blind folded in the path.
- Yield to the feeling that I am competent and therefore are entitled for the results as a matter of right. Here not only 'mine-ness' is an obstacle but expectancy of rewards is the basic barrier in the path of yielding.
- Thinking that, I actually know the path and do not need anyone's 'help' in the process of achieving the goal.
- Refuse to recognize that the gaining some prowess or power is due to the will of the Master and thinks that is because he has that competence. This is a sure path to fall away from the goal.
- Tendency to think that the Divine directly helps them and they do not yield to the will of the Master. This attitude leads them to interpret the works and messages of the Master according to their prejudice and trying to fit the thesis of the Master with what they consider as scriptural authority.
- Not yielding to the Master in Real sense.

How to come out of it?

- Attending regular Individual Sittings
- When the impressions are no longer given attention or allowed to manifest, they will eventually dissolve. This is called Niruddha. This is what Master advises to cultivate through the process of thinking that **it is the Master who does everything**.
- Learning to listen to the inner voice, by following the meditational methods properly and purifying self.
- **Yielding to the path of the Master with our entire body, mind and soul.** Surrender to the Master in every sense of the term is the way out of the intellect to grasp the meaning of the words and letters of the Master.
- Making the Will power stronger by showing courage for the right action.
- Being in the company of evolved souls constantly and reading their works with an attitude of assimilation rather than questioning. **The questioning attitude can be ruinous in the path of spirituality.**

When do we know we are out of it?

It is not clearly mentioned as the condition of completely out of this in the book, however these hints that indicate progress as mentioned in the article.

- Development of divine qualities of mercy, tolerance, forgiveness, patience, humility and many other such attributes.
- Purity in all the planes.

- One who resides in the blissful consciousness is the witness of "I AM Bliss". In such a condition Ahankar dissolves into the bliss, realizing its source, the Atman, and its triple manifestation, Sat, Chit and Ananda.
- Development of will, which is a capacity aspirant gains in the Vijnanamaya Kosa.
- Knowledge fails after the Vijnanamaya Kosa

5. **Anandamaya Kosa:** (Path of Grace – p365 - 388)

What are its key characteristics?

- This innermost sheath is made up of certain quantum of ignorance and knowledge (Sattva) is overpowered by ignorance (Tamas) and activity (Rajas).
- The Kosa in which the vasanas are stored is the Anandamaya Kosa the sheath of bliss or Ananda. The happiness/bliss that accrues from the satisfaction of desires however leaves us totally ignorant of the nature of happiness and does not permit us to understand while we acknowledge the different types of happiness.
- Vasanas are the results of subconscious impressions -samskaras- created through experience. The principle of karma phala is the root cause for formation of samskaras and vasanas. How these are created has been beautifully explained through these 2 shlokas of Bhagwad Gita.

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ (२-६२)

In a person constantly thinking about objects of sense there is born an attachment for them: from attachment springs passion; from passion arises wrath;

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ (२-६३)

From wrath ensues bewilderment; from bewilderment confusion in accumulated knowledge (smrti); from failure of accumulated knowledge, crash of discernment: with discernment crashed, he perishes outright.

What are the thoughts and thought patterns related to this?

- Enjoying and expressing Happiness. 'I am the enjoyer,' 'I am happy,' 'I am peaceful,' 'I am contented,' or 'My happiness,' 'my happiness is experienced,' 'my happiness is dear to me'
- Happiness that arises in one at the mere sight of a desired object (Vrittis of Priya)
- Happiness which is felt when one is in possession of this object (Moda)
- Happiness which one obtains from its actual enjoyment (Pramoda).

How to come out of it?

- The impressions that are stored in the individual consequent to the cravings and clinging wills (called the eeshana traya) that need to be erased out of the mind-flux of the individual through the craving for non-existence and yoga sadhana.
- Trainers do this service of removal of impression patterns and channels of thought, is evident to those who practice Pranahuti Aided Meditation

- Through the cleaning process, meditation on the lines given by the great Master and constant influxes of the Pranahuti which eradicates the vasanas one is enabled to cross over the cycle of births in the system of PAM

When do we know we are out of it?

- Knowledge fails after the Vijnanamaya Kosa and understanding also fails after Anandamaya Kosa.
- Master always said Peace is not our goal. Peace or bliss or happiness or pleasure is the display of the Anandamaya Kosa as it expresses it in itself or expresses itself through the other lower Kosas. When they are purified we enter into a state of nothingness that reflects but the Divine.

This study has really helped me to go deeper and understand my journey and currently thought pattern as well as possible bindings to some behaviors of others. With this increased awareness it will be easier to be more vigilant of the thoughts so as to understand the bindings, which will enable me to come out of it and will speed up the progress by the grace of the Master.

Similarly, if you are open and honest to yourself, you can and will understand your thought patterns as well as which ones are aligned to the Goal and which ones are not. Now, whether you want to entertain or ignore? The choice is yours, because, "As you think, so you become."

The greatest boon that we have in the system is in the form of Pranahuti, where each influx of it gives us the imperience of Bliss and Nothingness to know our Real nature, which is beyond all these Kosas. Only the influx of Pranahuti, enables us to come out of the bindings from each of the Kosas due to deeper Purification, diversion of flow to Upper and then to Atman and gradually traversing through the various knots. There is no substitute for it.

Here is what Master says, "Complete freedom from these sheaths (Kosas) is an essential feature of Realization and that is possible within the life-time of a man too. All these things shall be discussed during the course if only one remains adhered firmly to his final object or goal." (Silence Speaks.342)

With the Master's assurance, let us talk about another most important thing that helps us in our progress, because the Master says, "*If the Prayer is properly done, then nothing else remains to be done.*" (Imperience Beckons – p87)

We see that the Prayer given by the Master covers all the Kosas and our present condition of being slaves of wishes and we need to go beyond that to achieve our Goal of Nothingness. The only way for that is to totally and fully surrender to the Master in all the planes as He is the only one who can lift us up to that stage.

As I was writing this, the question came, am I saying the prayer or thinking. Many time we only say the prayer but it does not have the associated thinking. So when we understand the Real meaning and align our thinking to it completely and then Pray, then it will be effective because, "As you think, so you become"

Let us pray for everyone with all sincerity and surrender,

O, Master!

Thou art the Real Goal of Human life,

We are yet but slaves of wishes,
Putting bar to our advancement,
Thou art the only God and Power,
To bring us up to that stage.

Pranams,