

As you think, so you become - The Subtlest Method (SDG - 62)

--By Dipti Joshi

Pranams at the holy feet of the Masters of the KCV Order, and all the co-travellers on the path. The sentence of the seminar is taken from the article, The Subtlest Method by Rev. Master.

(For reference, I am quoting a few sentences prior to the topic of the seminar, from the article)

He states, God is simple and the method followed to achieve Him is also simple and straight. Man, technically termed Homo Sapiens i.e. wise man has tried to seek God. Thought when purely Divine can reach the source without fail. If corrupted with attributes and qualities, Realization also becomes corrupted and degraded. Gross methods give grosser results.

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 realize the subtlest Being. There should be one method, one Master and one God. Of course, selection you will have to do yourself.

In the above lines of the article, Rev. Master explains that the primary duty of man is to seek God and move closer to the Original Home. In order to realize nearness with the subtlest Being, we ought to adopt the subtlest method as is given by our beloved Master.

Our Prayer states,

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.

So at the outset, it is stated that, '**Thou art the real goal of human life**'. The goal as stated may or may not be easy to understand depending on one's samskaras and acquired thinking, however, the fact remains that - Master is the goal of human life.

This may generate a question on why to set Master as the real goal of human life and that is a separate discussion altogether.

Once we agree that Master is the goal of human life then we move on to the next step in the process i.e. what is our current position and what needs to be done to move towards this goal of human life.

Rev Master gives an excellent description in his article Craving of the Soul, stating that; Man is generally charmed so much by the environment as he has made for himself unconsciously,

that he seldom thinks of rising above it. But how is this to be made possible? - what is to be made possible? This rising above the environment that we have made for ourselves, the one in which we love to dwell in.

Rev Master continues, when we ponder over it, we find that we have set up in us a community of thoughts, feeding it with impulses, nurtured in the nursery of the brain, views from all corners resound the same note in their ears giving additional strength, and intensifying the effect of the environment further. (Ref: SDG 160 Craving of the Soul)

Now the current position of a human being is perfectly described by the above sentences. The next sentence of the prayer talks about this - '**We are yet but slaves of wishes, Putting bar to our advancement**'. The question that naturally follows is how to even move towards thinking or being subtle and simple in order to move towards the goal. Rev. Master's system helps us to gradually unfold ourselves, remove the intricacies in our being and to progress towards the goal.

Before doing any task in life, we first think about doing it; this is called sankalpa. It is a will / commitment to stay on the path and undergo the process of being on the path and make sure that the task is completed.

So when we take up Master as the real goal of human life, we are making a sankalpa of staying on the path, undergoing the process of becoming subtle and simple and to persist on the path in order to move closer and closer to the goal. This is the commitment that we have made.

The commandments 1, 2, 3 and 10 help us reassert our sankalpa / commitment each day. In order to persist on the path while undergoing the process of becoming subtler and simpler, we are aided in our efforts by the commandments 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. These commandments help us with the attitudes to be developed in sadhana and provide us the means to progress on the path, one step at a time. This is logical and simple enough to understand, however, where do we face the challenges?

Rev. Master says, **our ancestors had sought their ways of realization in the forests, away from the life of action, forsaking all ties of worldly connections with their fellow beings and others. We under the Sahaj Marg system try to create such an atmosphere around us in our homes so that they serve the purpose of forests.** Now comes the extremely critical part of the article - **What we do is to attach ourselves more and more to God, and the result is that non-attachment follows automatically as a corollary. We thus come to the state of Vairagya in a natural way without any effort on our part** (SDG - 142 Divine Pursuit).

Rev. Master continues further stating that, "We are very well aware that during this process the non-attachment follows as a corollary only if we have a rock solid attachment with the Master".

How do we attach more and more to our Master? - By following His commandments. As we are in the grihastha ashram, we come across many situations every day which present us opportunities to be more attached to our Master. We are pulled in different directions and we also have duties towards those in our care. We may want to be quiet and contemplate on our sadhana or on the thoughts or qualities of the Divine but a grihastha life does not always regularly provide us with such opportunities. How do we convert this kind of situation into one that is conducive for our sadhana?

We need to remember that everything that we come across in grihastha ashram is a component of the process of moving towards the goal and not an obstacle on our path towards our goal of life. Rev Sir, tells us how Rev. Master talks about the way to develop an attitude of being trustees towards our wives, children and parents, etc. Everything is being entrusted to us, and therefore, it is our duty to see that they are safeguarded. So this attitude of trying to see that the properties owned by God are kept in absolute safety and see that they grow, is what is expected of us.(Satyapadam - 1994, Role of Abhyasi Page - 8)

This I believe requires a major shift in thinking and if adopted successfully, reduces our problems by a great degree. While treading on the path towards the goal, we should keep the goal permanently in view and treat everything that comes our way as though it is coming from the Master. We have to tread the path with moderation and humility. When we become rigid in our views either regarding our sadhana - to the extent of shunning everything else or pertaining to our grihastha life - by being involved thoroughly, while treading our path towards the goal, we are like sharp stones in a fast flowing river that have yet to be smoothed out and as a result there will be clashes within our being and with whomever we come in contact with. However, if we treat everything that we have to deal with in our regular life as a Divine decree to be followed to the best of our ability without having any other thought than the one that I am appointed for this; we are like the smooth stones in the fast flowing river and our conflicts within ourselves and with others are greatly reduced. Our path towards the goal will become relatively smoother.

As many sadhakas are aware, the process of becoming subtle and simple or of becoming more and more attached to the Master is not an easy one if we are attached to people, money, properties, etc. Attachment with the Divine means becoming duly attached with everything else around us, both tangible and intangible. In this process it so happens that our commitment to the goal falters sometimes and we realize that our attachment to the Master is not so steady as we thought it to be. We realize that it is Rev. Master's love that keeps us steady on the path. We need to keep on learning and refining the correct attitudes needed to move towards the goal of life and we are greatly helped in the process by the events that occur in our daily life. This process is tedious in case we do not want to learn the lessons that come our way. However, it is just the way of life when we look at the whole thing with positivity and faith in the Master. Why do we face so much conflict or resistance within ourselves and with others whom we come in contact with, while following Rev Master's system that is so clear and simple?

Let us re-examine our current position properly. Each individual is a conglomerate of samskaras collected over past lives with interest and cherished in our psyche with great care. It is also important to note that each life presents us with a mental conditioning that is unique to each individual for his/her life span. Therefore the way we react to any situation in thought, word or deed at any given time is as varied and colorful as the colours of the rainbow. This setup gives a unique mindset to each individual that guides / misguides him / her in their life. In order to move towards the goal we have to adopt ways and means conducive to the progress on the path. The way we think and consequently act upon our thoughts needs a shift. What is the shift that is required? The shift is to move away from our limiting ideas and concepts. According to Rev. Master, the brain depending on the environment that it has made for itself has different sorts of channels like a spider's web with its centre in the middle. By the magnitude of the power given by the individual by thinking and rethinking, the channels

are not only formed but they have become thicker and thicker. In other words the person is caught in this web. The lack of harmony cannot be remedied unless the material force introduced into the system by the help of the suggestions given by the individual is drawn out. (SDG - 44 Problem and Its Solution reworded). In such a scenario how is the shift in thinking to be achieved?

In Rev. Sir's words, we must first become acutely and intensely aware of those thoughts of ours that may be holding some secret seed of self-defeat. If we do not know that we are doing this kind of compromised thinking or acting out the emotional counterparts what else can follow but defeat in our endeavour of fixing Master as the real goal of life (Satyapadam - 2007 14.4 Lion-Hearted men alone dare approach Reality and men are made so by Natural Path - Rev. KCN Sir's talk).

Rev Sir says, "Every one of us possesses two entities within and each of these entities advocates choices that ensure its survival. The question is what are these entities and what is their definition of survival? For most, the mind is the henchman of the ego, i.e. the ego calls the shots and employs the mind to do its bidding. The ego is that which gives us identity and separates us from others. The ego, when in charge, runs the mind very much in an autopilot fashion, making unconscious decisions which ensure that the ego survives. The other entity that lives within us is the Universal-Self or God-self, that which dissolves distinction amongst us and promotes unity. The God-self however is helpless when the ego has enabled the mind to function on autopilot, which manifests itself in the stimulus-response sequence.

In order for the God-self to gain hearing rights, the autopilot must be switched off, proffering an interruption in the stimulus-response sequence by inserting observation, a brief moment to consider the validity of the said response such that the sequence now reads Stimulus-Observation-Response, or S-O-R. Observation gives the God-self the opportunity to utilize the mind towards its own ends. This is another way of looking at Viveka and its role in our sadhana". (No Doubt the World will be paradise but for that we have to work hard - Bodhayanti Parasparam Volume - 5, Pages 273 - 274)

For example, the lower mind through its harmful inner voices and emotional forces may tell us to resent someone or to hate our life, or to give up, and accept fear as a way of life. Our own thoughts may instruct us, without our ever knowing it to cling to doubts; or to jump headlong into pools of self-pity. And because we do not know that there are alternatives, we do as we are instructed by our lower mind.

Further Rev. Sir states, working with self-observation, we can actually see, for ourselves, that these self-compromising thoughts are all due to impurities and dross, we have collected and stored in our mind. These thoughts and their corresponding actions slowly form layer after layer of grossness so that in the course of time we begin to resemble the silkworm that has spun a cocoon around itself. When man reaches this stage of his earthly existence, his life is one of artificiality and full of grossness, both in the level of action and in the results. The original purity has been reduced to a faint glimmer and that is often scarcely perceptible. (Showers of Divine Grace - Journey to the Real Existence - Page 23) Therefore the existing methods of living and thinking are definitely not going to lead us towards the goal, rather they are definitely taking us further and further away from the goal.

So when facing a situation where we have received a stimulus from our environment and our lower mind has already given us a solution to act upon, if we were to insert the Observation before we Respond, then we will be giving the God-self within us a chance to present us with an alternative that would be conducive to our progress on the path. This is where the third line of the prayer comes in - **Thou art the only God and Power to bring us up to that stage.** By following the system given by the Master and by attaching ourselves more and more to the Master by thinking that everything that is to be done is His decree and that we are serving Him alone when we are doing our regular duties; we are relying on Him and Him alone to take us towards the goal. This is the step which ensures that we travel on the path towards the goal where cooperation, unification, interdependence and other such liberating thoughts reside.

The above mentioned behavioural change requires tremendous amounts of moral courage to stick to what you know is right and yet to be in the midst of everything that grihastha ashram offers. How do we develop that kind of courage within us?

Rev Sir states, our system offers a multi-pronged approach to the problem. We are asked to ignore the thoughts that arise during meditation sessions and once we develop a habit of ignoring those thoughts then courage develops within us to step away from anything that binds us.

Rev. Sir says, with firm faith in the Master which is the first seed to bring out the Courage that is within us we learn during meditation and individual sitting sessions that we can and in fact do wake up to the right path in the middle of these negative states of mind. Working with self-observation, we can actually see, for ourselves, that these self-compromising thoughts are all due to impurities and dross we have collected and stored in our mind. In fact these thoughts have no reality content and are absolutely unauthentic. This means it is not our destiny to move in the direction of these lower order states of mind.

There are many mistaken notions dwelling in the darkness of the unawakened mind. To think that they would not squeal as we bring the light to bear on them would be naive on our part. But, with persistent practice of self-observation, we can even learn to use the mind's howling to live thought-free. To begin with, we should always take a conscious step back from anything which howls at us from within. This requires moral stamina and courage. He further states that this is the first step in realizing our true nature as freedom. We begin to feel the breeze of freedom from our desires and passion.

Once this courage is developed in us and we start feeling our freedom however preliminary it is, the higher mind or the upper mind quietly receives us. The five pillars of spiritual life namely, Truth, Non-Injury, Contentment, Non-Jealousy and Celibacy become possible to be implemented in our daily life only because of this courage. Rev. Sir further states that the practice of ignoring the thoughts that arise during meditation suggested by the Master is a very important step in our progress. It may be noted that stepping back from our own thoughts and learning to watch them is the same as stepping up into a free mind.

Rev. Sir further goes on to say in the same talk that our original condition has been described by the masters and mystics in many ways, such as a state of luminous, enlightenment, unconditional love, unborn Godlike, etc. In this natural state, we were free from fear, doubt, insecurity, needs or wants. To re-experience our natural state, we must purify ourselves

through removing all our defilements in thoughts, words and actions. The more we purify, the more we can re-experience our true nature.

Once we start ignoring all the limiting thoughts, our actions also change accordingly and our words will automatically be restrained. (Satyapadam - 2007 14.4 Lion-Hearted men alone dare approach Reality and men are made so by Natural Path - Rev. KCN Sir's talk).

Therefore in order to become subtle and simple, we have to watch our thoughts, words and deeds. When our thoughts, words and deeds are conducive to the process of unravelling ourselves then we move on towards the goal of human life otherwise the goal remains far away.