

Environment, Duty and Renunciation

INTRODUCTION

Revered Elders, Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Please accept my humble pranams.

The topic of the seminar is from the sentences, “Our duty is to grasp it firmly and stick to it at all cost. The renunciation develops automatically in our system” which is from the title “Craving of the Soul” of the book Showers of Divine Grace ([SDG 160](#))

First I would like to cover the context of this title and then dwell into the sentences of this topic. The context of the title is that it was a message on the Eve of 82 Birthday celebrations of Rev. Babuji Maharaj in Malaysia on 30-04-1981.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE (CRAVING OF THE SOUL)

In the article, Craving of the Soul, Master covers various topics in the following order.

- Master emphasizes the effect on the environment on the human psyche and how it exerts a strong inertial force on the individual in preventing one from the primary duty of realization.
- Master explains how through devotedly following the methods of meditation advocated by Him, one can easily realize the Goal of Life.
- Master explains that mere theoretical knowledge of talking about the Ultimate in itself does not help in realizing the Goal of Life. Only practicing His methods with the help of Pranahuti can help one to make progress. He asserts that during our march Towards Infinity on the Path of Grace, there comes a point where Divinity Dawns and the negative attitude towards life goes far away and He asserts that the demolition of the past is a chapter in Sahaj Marg which is the experience of His disciples.
- Master gives hope to humanity that He is preparing such souls who can help craving souls to arrive at the destination which may appear to be far off by helping them dive deeper into Silence and help them convert even unfavourable things into favourable ones. A proof for converting unfavourable into favorable is the attitude one develops on the path of freedom with respect to the practice of Commandments 5 and 7 where one is asked by the Master to treat miseries and Divine Gifts and Be thankful and wrongs done by others with heavenly gratitude .

- Master asserts that the craving of the soul can be satisfied best when one is living to reach the highest state possible as He promises if we sincerely practise His methods with love and devotion, He takes responsibility for our Spiritual aspirations.
- Master encourages us to travel in the Path without worrying about shortcomings and setbacks as assures our progress provided we are sincere and determined.
- Master urges us to be like lions and suns of spirituality and do spiritual good to others to fulfill His Mission of installing spirituality in place of prevailing non spirituality and participate in the transformation of Human Consciousness into one of Divine Consciousness.

TOPIC OF THE SEMINAR

Now coming to the topic of the seminar “Our duty is to grasp it firmly and stick to it at all cost. The renunciation develops automatically in our system”, Master addresses the effect of the environment as an impediment in the path of duty of self realization and exhorts us to stick to the duty of realization through determination and if we stick to it, renunciation of the negative effects of environment of human psyche happens automatically.

Master deals with following spiritual aspects in the topic of this seminar

- Environment
- Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)
- Vairagya (Renunciation)
- Duty
- Determination

We will look into each of them in detail below.

ENVIRONMENT

- “Community of Thoughts” is the term Master uses to equate environment in the context of human behavior/experience in general and spiritual aspirations in particular. He also explains how these “Community of Thoughts” act as a force of Inertia exerting influence on the human psyche to make an individual continue to live in their sphere of influence and seldom allowing an individual to rise above them.
- It is worth repeating the exact quote from the article here
“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” ([SDG 160](#))
- It is also important to point to Rev. Sir’s brilliant and thorough explanation of the concept of “Community of Thoughts” in the book Bodhayanti Paraspam VOLUME 9 ([BP9 2](#)), Chapter 1.

- One can spend a whole life or significant portion of life under the influence of the environment without even attempting to rise above one's current state of stagnation. In this context, the environment is analogous to the concept of "Inertia" from physics.
- Even when one attempts to rise above the current environment due to either the Grace of God or fructification of samskaras, the pull from the environment can be so great that one may abandon their attempt to rise above. From this aspect, the environment can be viewed as a whirlpool.
- To explain the effect of Environment on the human psyche, Rev. Sir in the topic "On Repentance and Pardon" in Chapter 2 of Bodhayanti Paraparam VOLUME 5 ([BP5](#)), he narrates the story of a young farmer Raju and the effect of environment on his behavior.

The summary of the story is that Raju takes the help of a bird to interpret the dreams of the king in the empire in which he lived so that he could secure the corresponding rewards announced by the king. On three occasions, Raju takes the help.

1. Interprets the dream where treachery prevails in the environment and collects rewards but ends up behaving the same way with the bird and reneges on the promise to share the reward equally
2. Interprets the dream where violence prevails in the environment and collects rewards but ends up again behaving the same way with bird and violently attacks the bird instead of sharing the reward and the bird gets injured but escapes
3. Interprets the dream where peace and trust prevails in the environment and collects rewards but this time gives the entire reward to the bird and repents for his past action.

In reaction to the repentance of Raju's past actions, the bird explains that it did not blame Raju for his past conduct on him but on the environment. The bird did not expect an **average man**, ruled by the spirit which dominates the atmosphere, his actions were governed by it. The bird also explains that there are very few persons who are not influenced by what is in the air and he was not one of them and wished Raju happy time with his money. For reference, [here](#) is the link of the original story.

- From the above story, one can derive a few important conclusions, Raju is an average man governed by the environment, however the bird is not governed by the environment and its thought process and judgement were above the prevailing environment and it was objective in its assessment. We can view another way that the bird's environment was qualitatively subtler and above the prevailing environment and it also alludes that only few people rise above.
- From this it is encouraging that it is possible to rise above like the bird. Especially when we follow the methods of Master sincerely with love and devotion, take pranahuti and live according to Ten Commandments
- By following his methods, we have the means to replace one set of "Community of Thoughts" with another set of subtle "Community of Thoughts" and further replace them

with even subtler “Community of Thoughts” as we progress in the path and so on till we reach the Goal of Life.

- This can be understood as “We have to carry our own environment”
- Even a subtle environment can have inertial influence on our spiritual growth as there is no limit to refinement of one's own spiritual environment as we progress in the path. Perhaps this is the reason why Master promises that “Avadhuta” state is not possible in Sahaj Marg in the book Towards Infinity ([BWS 296](#))

VIVEKA

- Either by the Grace of God or fructification of samskaras(Bhoga), human beings continue to get opportunities to rise above their environment.. By virtue of observing life, where we see humans are born, live and die, anything and everything worth mentioning goes through the same cycle, humans with mildly developed intelligence can quickly come to the same conclusion of Greek Philosopher Heraclitus “The Only Constant in Life is Change”.
- Rev. Sir deals with the concept of change of everything in detail in the “Nature of Viveka” Chapter of Bodhayanti Paraparam VOLUME 3, Chapter 1 ([BP3](#)). It is worth repeating from that book verbatim the following
“One of the common things I face is why I always talk about the coming and going of events or the transitory nature of things and events. I would like to answer saying that this is the most essential recognition to be learnt in spirituality, without which it would be almost impossible to love truth or Reality. It is obvious that we cannot love truth when we believe what is unstable as stable. The reason why these events come and go, all mental activities, all physical activities, all spiritual activities, our beliefs, sensations, perceptions and feelings also are events in nature and they too come and go regularly like a sunrise in the morning or as rain off and on.”
- From the above it is very clear that everything is transitory and nothing is permanent other than the witness within us which is observing these changes . This knowledge is viveka or discriminative intelligence. This is what
- In order to arrive at this knowledge(jnana), we need to apply our discriminative intelligence when changes in our “Community of Thoughts” happen either by
 - Grace of God (Example coming to know about Master)
 - External Forces (Commandment 7) through which some wrongs done by others or Internal Forces through fructification (bhoga) of impressions through some miseries (Commandment 5)
- Viveka is what Master alludes to in the sentence “When once we have realized that these are spoiling agents, ***it means some diversion has come in***. This is the first step towards vairagya or renunciation and our thought is then set on something better or nobler”

- Viveka is considered as the first sadhana in tradition ([BWS 256](#)). However, it is the result of practices followed in Master's System ([BWS 258](#)).
- This is essentially the diversion of the thought from lower heart to upper heart. That means now the heart which was using the mind's faculties for lower purposes governed by the grosser environment is now going to use the mind's faculties for nobler purposes governed by a nobler environment. Master clarifies to us in the Silence Speaks Page 503 under the title "HEART AND MIND"
"The heart is the field for the action of the mind. Mind is always as it is. It is the heart which as the field of action of the mind, is to be set right" ([SS 505](#))

VAIRAGYA

- When Viveka (discriminative Intelligence) matures, renunciation (Vairagya) of spoiling agents happens automatically. To quote from the article verbatim
"Our duty is to grasp it firmly and stick to it at all cost. The renunciation develops automatically in our system"
- Master states in Silence Speaks ([SS 97](#)) "Vairagya can be attained only when one is wholly diverted towards the Divine. When it is so, one naturally becomes disinterested in his own self including everything connected with it. Thus he loses not only the body Consciousness as well. What remains then is nothing but the being is "dead form" or a "living dead".
- Also Master states in Silence Speaks ([SS 97](#)) "I do not agree with those who hold the view that the only way for non-attachment or vairagya is to get away from home. One should be able to discriminate between good and bad. Having no discrimination is the characteristic of an inferior man".
- Also Master states in Silence Speaks ([SS 98](#)), "Renunciation is a condition of inner state of mind where one's eyes are every moment fixed on the reality alone which is unchanging, eternal and free from attraction or repulsion."
- Vairagya is considered as the second sadhana in tradition ([BWS 258](#)). However, it is a stage of elementary attainment in Yoga and the Sadhanas or means of attainment of the stages. In the Sahaj Marg system of Yoga, Viveka and Vairagya are not treated as sadhanas but are left aside to be developed auto-matically by an aspirant during his progress([BWS 259](#)).
- Rev. Sir in the chapter of VAIRAGYA in of Bodhayanti Parasparam VOLUME 3, Chapter 3 ([BP3 19](#)) explains as "The concept of Vairagya is directly connected to the concept of Viveka. In tradition they are generally called two "Bhushanam" or two ornaments we should have in the path of spirituality - "Jana, Vairagya Bhushanam". If we don't have these two, Viveka which is otherwise called "Janan" and Vairagya we are not likely to move far in the path of spirituality"
- Rev. Sir explains in the same chapter ([BP 22](#)), "Renunciation is possible only for a person who is aware of the presence of Divine everywhere"

- Rev Sir addresses the concepts of Trusteeship and Due attachment are the various aspects of Vairagya in the same article on Vairagya
- Rev. Sir in the chapter on “Balanced Existence and Stages of Progress” ([BP1 396](#)) explains Vairagya from the concept of Anuraga for the Divine, more attachment to the Divine
- In summary, from all the above quotes, one can see that in Sahaj Marg, when we talk about Vairagya, we are not viewing through lens of negative attachment to the world as commonly understood, but through the positive greater attachment to the Divine which automatically results in attitudes of Trusteeship and Due attachment as one matures in sadhana.

DUTY

- From the topic of the seminar Master talks about “duty” as “Out duty is to grasp it firmly and stick to it at all cost”
- Here duty is related to sticking with determination to the Goal of Life which one arrives at as Viveka develops.
- In Commentary on Commandment 3, Master asserts “ Thus to reach the Infinite Absolute is one of the primary duties of man” ([BWS 134](#)). Here Master is not just talking about mundane duties, he is talking about realization of the Self as the primary duty.
- In the Goal of Life Chapter from the Book “Reality at Dawn”, Master addresses duty as “ It is only the idea of destination, which we keep alive in our minds and for that we practise devotion only as duty. Duty for duty’s sake is without double “Niskham Karma” (selfless action) and to realize our goal of life is our bounden duty”([BWS 179](#)) . Here Master addresses duty from the point of view of devotion to the Goal of Life and also the method of not forming new samskaras.
- In the Ways and Means Chapter of Reality at Dawn, Master addresses duty from the point of view of Due attachment and renunciation. “The real evil is only our undue attachment with things, which we are associated with. This is the main cause of suffering. But if we are able to do everything in life thinking to be our duty without any feeling of attraction or repulsion we are in a way free from worldly ties and have renounced the world in the true sense although we possess and make use of many things”([BWS 189](#)).
- In the Chapter on Spiritual Training of Reality at Dawn, Master addresses duty from point of view not neglecting the Grihastha Dharma of duty towards family in the process of realization. Master asserts “The real problem before us is not to provide means for the spiritual training of a chosen few who have renounced the world but for people in general whose duties in the world besides devotional are manifold and which they cannot safely ignore. They in fact fail in their duty if they neglect any of them. To them it is essential that their spiritual as well as worldly life must go side by side equally resplendent and for this we have to discover the right means”([BWS 221](#))
- Again in Chapter on Spiritual Training of Reality at Dawn, Master addresses duty from the perspective of Role of Abhyasi as follows “The thought of the betterment and progress of the disciple is no doubt, the uppermost in the heart of the master for which

he exerts himself as far as possible but that does not mean that we may remain idle doing nothing ourselves and leave our share of work too upon him. We must as our duty, try our utmost to save him from unnecessary exertion on our account in as much as we can do ourselves for our advancement and should in no case neglect our part of the duty” ([BWS 230](#))

- In the Chapter on Constant Remembrance of Reality at Dawn, Master prescribes the practical methods of practicing Constant Remembrance during the process performing one’s spiritual and mundane duties. “We must snatch a few minutes from our hours of rest (preferably at bed-time) and pray to God with a sincere heart for His guidance and support on the path of duty” ([BWS 240](#))
- In the Chapter on Realization of Reality at Dawn, Master cautions us that we cannot neglect duty to either mundane world or spiritual aspirations “We are failing in our sacred duty if we do not exert ourselves for the discharge of our responsibilities pertaining either to this or to the next world” ([BWS 252](#))
- From the above, we can conclude that in our Master system, realization of self is the one of the primary duties of man and for that one should not neglect the other mundane duties towards family and society and perform all actions with due attachment. However in the context of this topic, duty is viewed from the angle of adhering to the path of realization at all cost with determination when once we recognize the grosser environment we are in are spoiling agents to achieve the Goal of Life.

DETERMINATION

- In the context of this topic, determination here refers to “Our duty is to grasp it firmly and stick to it at all cost”. Here determination is to put to practice the discriminative intelligence that got developed once we recognize the current grosser environment as an impediment to one spiritual progress.
- In the commentary on Commandment 3 of Sri Ramchandra’s commandments, Master writes about as “ Now the silent motion which we have created in it started merging into it. In it we start expanding. In this way our laya avastha in it becomes durable and lasting. It is thus clear that the firmness of will and determination to reach the holy entity helped us to arrive at the destination, with the result that we firmly established in the final state. How this most difficult problem was so easily solved by virtue of the correctness of our goal and the firmness of determination may not now be difficult to understand”. ([BWS 134](#))
- In the Chapter on Meditation of Efficacy of Raja Yoga, Master writes about the impact of determination as “If somehow or other they make a firm determination to reach the Reality, the power of Master shall affect them” ([BWS 38](#)) . If we are determined, He asserts Master support is assured.
- In the article on [Determination](#), Master answers the following question
How determination is possible?
When we gird up our loins to sacrifice our pleasure and to shake off idleness

ESSENCE OF THE TOPIC/ARTICLE

The essence of the topic/article is as follows

- Environment has an inertial/whirlpool kind of effect on human psyche to maintain the status quo
- However once some diversion happens and a spiritual aspirant gets a glimpse of nobler/subtler environment, once should not continue to stagnate with excuses for the status quo
- When diversion happens in consciousness, it is basic viveka to hold onto the Methods of Master, take individual sittings through the trainer and practice Commandments to improve one's own spiritual condition
- It is one's duty to improve one's spiritual condition through determination and stick to the methods at all cost
- As a result of sincerity of continued practice, renunciation develops automatically.
- When it comes to the environment or community of thoughts even in normal mundane life, we often encounter situations where we try to change current troubled state of mind by making attempts to replace one set of thoughts with another. This is what we commonly call as taking a break, trying to do some other activity, going to a different place etc. It is possible to be successful in a mundane world by making use of such tactics/ strategies.
- But when it comes to the spiritual aspiration of solving one's problem of life itself, such tactics or strategies will seldom prove effective. In this case, if by chance, by the Grace of God, we get in touch with the Master of High Calibre and follow the Methods prescribed, we will be able to solve the problem of life.
- Fortunately for us, we have reached the feet of such a Master and we have experienced His Blessings during individual sittings, Satsangs and Bandharas and have experienced/ imperienced rarefied states of consciousness. We have experienced Viveka and Vairagya too. That means we have experienced diversion from grosser to subtler states of consciousness. So it is our duty to resolve with determination to follow the System with all sincerity and devotion and achieve self realization.
- Love and Devotion to the Goal of Life/Master and His Methods, through Constant Remembrance, we start losing conflicting ideas and start acquiring a state of permanency in mediation.
- There are times when our determination is shaky, our motivations are not all that pure, we need to evolve our own methods to bring back the determination. Master has encouraged us with many positive and encouraging assertions/words and we can use them to our benefit. I am listing a few of them below
 - "The idea may look foreign to you at first sight, but if you pause a little to consider the problem (the Destination) you will surely come to the conclusion that you are sailing towards your own Home, wherefrom you have snatched away by the irony of Fate" ([SGD 118](#)).
 - "We see everything tending towards the Center, and the Center itself yawning towards the circumference" ([SDG 56](#))

- “When you have played your part fully well, the Ultimate cannot fall short in playing His Part” ([SDG 29](#))
 - “Once Divinity dawns, the negative attitude to life goes far away. The demolition of past is a chapter in Sahaj Marg” ([SDG 162](#))
 - “There cannot be any breakdown in spirituality, if faith and desire for the Ultimate is there. Physical or mental troubles do not tell on spirituality.” ([SDG 163](#))
 - “Spirituality is my responsibility, as practice is your responsibility” ([SDG 163](#))
 - “The most important factor in realization is self-confidence in our own capacity and power to achieve success” ([BWS 197](#))
 - “We must march on the path of realization like a brave soldier with full faith and confidence not minding the difficulties or reverses” ([BWS 197](#))
 - “The realization of God which has so far been considered to be extremely difficult, requiring hard labour and persistent effort for many lives, is not really so. God is simple and can be achieved by equally simple means. The hard and fast rules of life and tiring practices prescribed by teachers for realization have really made matters so complicated that people are led to believe it to be beyond their power and capacity. I may assure you very sincerely that realization is not at all a difficult thing, only if you earnestly divert your attention to it” ([BWS 224](#))
 - “Will faith and confidence are the elementary factors which contribute to an easy success on the path of realization.” ([BWS 233](#))
- As we progress in the path with steadiness, our sadhana matures, there comes a point where we are exhorted by our Master to make unfavourable things favourable and we are asked to succeed by converting the whole of material force into spirituality.
 - Master exhorts to take up spirituality like a tiger in the realm and progress is assured in the realization of self.
 - As a by product of our own self realization, we will also participate in His Mission which is to install spirituality in the place of prevailing non spirituality

CONCLUSION

Master states that once we realize certain things in our environment are spoiling agents, it is prudent for us to ignore them with determination to march on the path of realization as realization is one of the primary duties of man. Renunciation develops automatically as we are in the path of duty and if we proceed with love and devotion to His Methods and constantly remember the Goal, progress is assured and at a higher point Divinity dawns and negative attitude to life goes away. If we are determined and be like tiger in the realm of God our progress is assured by our Master and will also participate in His Mission of installing spirituality in the place of prevailing non spirituality.

Pranams.