

ON REPENTANCE AND PARDON

Talk on the occasion of the birth day of Rev. Babuji Maharaj 2005.

Dear associates in the Natural Path,

Time to time, I have been trying to share the little facts, experiences and understanding that the benevolent Master has been conferring on me. I have had occasions to talk about Prayer. Somehow the more I try to share this aspect of sadhana the more hollow I feel in having really communicated anything. The feelings are too close to chest that even intimate hugging does not appear to enable the other to understand the feelings. We are aware there are quite a few components imbedded in the prayer and this time I would like to share the little I know about Repentance and Forgiveness or Pardon.

While offering prayer as advised before going to bed we are to ask for forgiveness. What should we actually ask God or Master to do? I am conscious that most of you are serious sadhakas and would consider my talking on this subject is a bit arrogant. But I am sure you will all agree that breaking promises to God is a very human thing to

do. We promise God that we will not be hateful, or selfish, or engage in unhealthy activities, and then we do and we feel awful: not only because we know the act is wrong, but because we broke our promise to our Master who loves us.

I have personally faced this problem several times and frankly had my own ingenious explanations to offer to myself for not keeping up the word. I may share that I find the solution to this problem of changing this pattern is twofold.

Master in his 10th Commandment commends us to feel the presence of God and first repent. This act of firstly to repent needs greater understanding of the act of repentance. Repentance is not just throwing up our hands and saying I am sorry.

Repentance involves truly admitting and understanding the nature of our mistakes, seeing the root causes of our wrongful activities and the consequences they have on other people and the world. It also involves trying the best we can, to mend the damage that has been done, and then asking for forgiveness from Master/God and pardon from the people we have hurt.

Of these two seeking forgiveness from Master appears to be easy and we tend to avoid asking those who are hurt by us to forgive us for reasons ranging from arrogance to sheer simple Ego. I am trying to stress the point that 'repentance is work' and not words.

The fact that we err often and do wrong things should be first admitted. Without admitting this fundamental aspect there can be no repentance. To seek forgiveness we also need to fully understand that God/Master is an embodiment of Kshama or forgiveness. Contrary to the common understanding, admitting of a fault or error or wrong done is not a self indictment. It is an open admission of our falliability.

To the question why should God/Master forgive us the answer as already stated is his capacity to forgive under all circumstances. Apart from that He knows our nature so thoroughly that he never tries to count our mistakes. This is another spiritual truth. God never counts our errors and follies but it is our conscience that does the task. The inner conscience ever watches and is critical of our lapses. Surely this depends on our family traditions and our notions of what is good and bad. We many times cannot forgive ourselves. But Master does because he

knows how frail and fragile we are and he also has the love and concern for us to forgive and also help us to rectify. It is this capacity of Master to forgive that makes us revere Him.

The wrongs that we do to others are a result most of the time of a reaction to the perceived wrong they have done to us. The full understanding of the forgiving nature of Master implies that we also should forgive our friends, family and even our enemies who we feel harm us. Thus the following of this commandment enables us better to comply with the commandment 7 of the Master.

Prayer at bed time is one of the toughest to do not only for the above reasons but the environment of the prayer itself is such that prayer is not what we are naturally inclined to do. Most of the people have bed rooms which are supposed to be pleasant for activities which are least spiritual. The habit of either hearing a good music which satisfies the carnal plane or viewing some videos which gratify directly or indirectly the lower order mental activities is also prevalent in most of the homes. Any alteration in this is bound to result in some misunderstanding with the spouses. 'What if?' I can pray where ever I want to and it is the will that matters' is a naïve answer. The atmosphere and the thoughts

prevailing in the atmosphere are the main factors that affect our affection. In this context alone I said quite some time back that we should not meditate on the bed itself.

I am reminded of the importance of the thoughts in the atmosphere emphasized in an ancient story of our country. I do not remember the source from which I got this story. But briefly it is like this.

There was an young farmer named Raju who worked hard on his land. One evening, as he rested under a banyan tree, the royal herald rode by announcing that the king had an unusual dream. Whoever could explain it to his satisfaction would receive 100 gold coins. In his dream, the king saw a sneering jackal trying to jump on to his lap. While trying to ward it off, he woke up with an uneasy feeling.

Raju felt if only he knew the answer his position would improve and as he murmured this to himself he heard a sweet voice, 'I will give you the answer provided you promise to give me half of your award.' It was a beautiful little bird that had hopped down to a lower branch right above Raju's head. An enthusiastic Raju immediately

accepted the offer. The answer was: 'The throne symbolizes the kingdom; the jackal symbolizes treachery and selfish cunning dominating the atmosphere. Ask the king to be cautious.'

Raju met the king the next day and interpreted the dream. The king was satisfied and Raju received the 100 gold coins. Walking back, Raju thought, 'what a pity I have to part with half the amount of the reward.' He took a detour and avoided the bird.

He invested the money prudently and grew rich. 5 years passed. One evening the king's general galloped down to his house and called out: 'Hurry up. His Majesty has had another intriguing dream. He saw a bloody dagger circling his head.' Raju promised to meet the king the next day.

It was a moonlit night, and as soon as Raju approached the banyan tree, the bird appeared again and said, 'I know about the dream.' Raju promised to give the bird half of the reward, and the bird explained that the dagger represented violence that the atmosphere was steeped in and the king should be on his guard. In the morning, Raju explained the dream and got a reward of 1000 gold

coins.

Raju was afraid that the talking bird might report the matter to the king, and when he met the bird the next day he threw a stone at it, wanting to kill it. However, the bird escaped. Raju forgot all about it, until 5 years later, he was again brought before the king. This time the king had dreamt of a delicate dove resting on his lap. Once again he went to the bird, promised half the reward and was told that the dove symbolized peace and the king could now rest in peace. This time Raju received 10,000 gold coins.

This time Raju hurried to the banyan tree, and offered to the bird the entire amount in total surrender. The bird, however, had no use for it and advised Raju to spend it on the people's welfare. A tearful Raju pleaded for pardon for his bad conduct. The bird astonishingly said 'What is your conduct in this matter? On the first occasion, there was treachery in the atmosphere; the second time, there was violence in the atmosphere, and now there is peace and trust in the atmosphere. Please know that no one really acts according to his personal will.'

If we were to choose a single event in our daily living that is most common, it would perhaps be the fact that in almost any group or class of people in of society, the subject of the conversation is a happening for which someone is being blamed: someone is responsible, someone should be punished! This has become the very basis of living and has been causing the 'suffering'.

It is necessary to change the atmosphere in which we pray if prayer has to be efficient. From this angle it is better to use the words “Prayer before going to bed” rather than “bed time prayer.” That the whole world is now a days bombarded with ideas of violence, hatred, jealousy, envy and unbridled appeal to gratification of passions is however a matter we have to contend with even if we were to go to bed in the peak of Himalayas. There is no solution to that unless humanity becomes sane. And for that the solution is assiduous practice of the prayer on point A at 9 P.M. or any such suitable time even as advised by our great Master Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur.

We are to pray before going to bed but then how long is a question many have. If we were to conclude our prayer soon, we seem to have the problem of going to sleep. I practice to be in the thought of the Master in the prayer

mood till I get sleep. I find then the period spent is a type of meditation also and I tend to feel the nearness to Master. Surely this must be the case of all the aspirants who are here.

Most of us are aware that the left side of our brain is predominately the logical/verbal aspects of our human nature and the right side of our brain is primarily the emotional/creative side. Logically it follows prayer is the right brain function while meditation is the left brain function. If continue to be in a state of prayer after concluding our prayer seeking pardon we tend to contemplate on various aspects of our life where there were errors and follies. Such contemplation can also lead to introspection. On such introspection lie the clues for betterment. When we do so we are combining Personal Introspection and Divine Love. Such a partnering of the two sides of the brain leads to a harmonious and balanced mind. I do not know how many of the persons present here have taken the small test on how brain works that is available in the office of Imperience also. Periodical evaluation on this test is one of the relaxation measures I adopt and I have found that over a period of time the left and right hemispheres are working at 50:50 basis. I call them "partners" because they represent two potentially harmonious aspects of human nature that should be working together in order for us to be

functioning at our best. Keeping moderation and balance as our goals the advantage of using these different ways of functioning in harmony are unlimited.

From the knowledge I have got, which I know may be very limited I find that the mainstream psychiatric practice to the cutting edge of empowerment theory, the two-brain theory of human nature is now widely accepted. When two opposing forces stop competing for self-gratification, and agree to support and enable each other, these partners work together, helping us to make more balanced decisions and our motives wiser and more insightful. Whenever the dual talents and abilities of our total human nature are combined together, the result is the growth of more harmonious, mutually supportive attitudes and actions. Many of our behavioural traits get moulded and we start feeling the inner pulse to follow the Commandments of the Master. Long back, a colleague of my revered father who was also a Preceptor was educating me on the Tenth Commandment and said perhaps it is wiser to start complying with the injunctions with this commandment. I have experienced the wisdom in this counsel.

Genuine repentance and seeking pardon can become easy when we fuse the logical mind with the emotional mind

and this is what the Prayer given by our Master aims at. Meditation or contemplation on the miserable condition we have which we have placed before the Master seeking pardon is the effort of the emotional mind or feelings of the heart to persuade the rational mind or our head. The practical wisdom we gain from such efforts cannot be easily explained and one needs to feel it himself. In such an exercise one realizes how much of 'ego' which is nothing but our own creation can play and try to fool us. While I am sure the aspirants who try this fusion have their own experiences I think it works like this.

Firstly we gain an insight that there are two forces namely the logical and emotional minds at play. At this stage we let the conversations and feelings flow freely between both sides of our brain. This is a great mind chatter and can be tedious also. But with effort we will explore the different aspects of our dualistic nature through personal introspection. We discover that our conflicts are due to our perception of reality which is influenced by the experiences in our past.

Secondly finding ourselves in an enigma we start appealing to Master. Most of the time we find the compromises and solutions to our inner conflicts emerging from within.

Thirdly such solutions show us a way to meet situations in life in future by enabling us make better decisions and assist us with going forward with our life.

Fourthly sometimes we feel concerned about an imbalance between our needs and wants. We discover disturbances between ourselves and the other people that are involved in our life. They may be our family, friends, coworkers and the like. At this stage it is necessary that we should not come to any conclusion of judging the merits of either but understand that it is part of our psyche and the differences should be accepted as part of our human journey to the Infinite.

Last and finally at this stage we need to surrender to the Master in Toto without preferring any alternatives that may appear before us and seeking relief through such means.

We can fuse the prayer and meditation or contemplation before going to bed and this is one of the useful methods for improving our sensitivity. Feeling the presence of the Master then is something that flows through our consciousness through the night. We can easily recognize

the role of the talk/listen or thought/feeling dualities (two separate, yet equal forces) in prayer and meditation. Prayer is the talking aspect of human nature and its traditional goal is to talk to a Higher Source and in our case humble submission to the Master. Talking has been shown to be a function of the verbal/analytical left hemisphere of the human brain. Here, the talking aspect is used as a guide to an introspection process that helps us uncover the unique aspects of our personality. Some of the areas where it fosters greater communication are the differences between our analytical and intuitive skills, our private and social worlds, our realities and our dreams and our human and higher powers or Master.

When prayer and meditation are partnered together, a bridge is built between the left and right aspects of our brain. This is the partnership that brings the power of our thoughts and the power of our feelings together for the benefit of each. Whenever we fuse thus our brain powers our thoughts enter into the realm of prayer, stimulating our ability to analyze the difference between right and wrong, good and bad. Then our feelings enter into the subtle universe of meditation, inspiring our ability to intuit the difference between love and fear, yes and no.

It is then the last aspect of the Tenth Commandment

asking us to resolve non repetition of the errors and mistakes becomes possible to be implemented.

The fusion of the two parts of the brain helps us to choose what is best for us and others. And whenever our thoughts and feelings work together for the benefit of all involved, we find a pathway to the Highest Power of all, the Master who is Pure Love. Then the feeling of pardon sought for matures and we become empowered to resolve non repetition of the past acts and feelings.

One more word before I conclude and this relates to courage. I was talking to one of my sons recently as to how children behave in the garden areas or parks. They are so natural and happy and it is really astonishing that elders are supposed to not behave like that and in certain gardens children also are asked to restrain themselves from such naturalness. It is a common observation for us to find an year or two old kids playing the grass near about the mother but unmindful of her. We find the child with a smile as if it had been set free from some sort of prison, and this particularly when the family lives in the match box series of pigeon holes called flats. We find the children fall on the grass, get up and without hesitation or even looking back at the mother, run as fast as it can with a smile on the face undisturbed as if nothing has

happened to it.

This leads to the contemplation why most of us elders do not behave in this manner. Most of us when we fall down (figuratively) make a big fuss and even try to make a second attempt. We feel so embarrassed that someone is aware of our failure that we do not make any second attempt. Or else because we failed we justify ourselves that we are not cut for that task and end up our attempts being afraid of a failure again.

The children when they fall do not perceive their falling down as a failure but treat it as a learning experience and feel compelled to try again. It means they have not associated falling down with failure. This association is one of the few that we need to get rid off. It is this association that is behind our half hearted attempts and no attempts to try again and succeed. In every one of us there is this child with courage to try and succeed and that needs to be strengthened when we have to resolve non repetition of the mistakes and errors in our behaviour. I believe that courageous part of us, that courageous child within us all, will always be with us for as long as we live. We only need to allow it to emerge more fully. We only need to once again connect with that child within us and give that child permission to run

freely, just like that child in the park. We can then have courage and confidence to resolve non repetition of blunders and errors in our behaviour.

I thank all you for having given me an opportunity to express my thoughts regarding certain factors in the Prayer that we offer to our Master.

Pranams.

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