

Master's Support

World peace is the crying need of the day and those at the top are trying hard to bring it about. But the means adopted for the purpose do not so far seem to promise fruitful results. The efforts for the establishment of world peace do not seem to be very effective only for the reason that they are merely external, touching only the fringes of the problem. As a matter of fact world peace can never be possible unless we take into account the inner state of the individual mind. World peace is directly related with individual peace, for which the individual mind is to be brought up to the required level. If the individual mind is brought to a state of rest and peace, everything in the world will then appear to him in the same colour. It is, therefore, essential to find out means for developing within every individual a state of peace and contentment. Thus, all that we have to do for the attainment of world peace is to mould the mental tendencies of the people individually. That means the proper regulation of mind so as to introduce into it a state of moderation. That is the only way for bringing peace into the world. It is, therefore, essential for all of us to develop peace of mind within our individual self. But that being exclusively the scope of spirituality, one must necessarily resort to spiritual means for the purpose.

One of the greatest specialties of Hinduism, as pointed out by Swami Vivekananda, is that it offers means and methods of attainment of nobler ideals of life to people of every taste, mentality and talent. For this purpose, there is in it for some the worship of idols and images, for others that of gods and deities, for still others that of God with form or without form and so on. Further still for those of higher capabilities there are the paths of upasana, bhakti, jnana etc. For the attainment of still higher ideals there is again the path of Yoga classified under different heads including HathaYoga and RajaYoga. As for the attainment of liberation or complete freedom almost all the great sages of the past and the present agree on the point that Raja Yoga alone is the path that ensures success up to the final point of human approach, and everyone dedicated to complete freedom must sooner or later come up to it. Natural Path runs closely along the lines of Raja Yoga but with certain amendments and modifications to purge out superfluities from that system hitherto known by the name of the Raja Yoga.

Since proper regulation of mind is essential for the attainment of inner peace, it is necessary from the very first step to look to the proper moulding of the tendencies

of the mind which usually remain disturbed by the effect of sense-craving in man. This, in fact, must be the basic object of every sadhana undertaken for the purpose. No sadhana is of any avail unless it guarantees moderation in the mental tendencies of the sadhaka. The mind, which in its primordial state was pure and regulated, has now been spoilt and polluted by the overall influence of the senses. It is now to be corrected and set right, and for this the responsibility lies solely upon the individual himself. Almost all sadhanas have basically the same purpose which remains neglected. Methods of austerity, penance and physical mortification usually applied for keeping the mind under control do not relieve it of its misdirected trend. They only serve to keep the evil subdued within, which might at any time burst forth when by chance the control is somehow relaxed. The real solution of the problem therefore lies not in controlling the mind by suppression, restraint or mortification, but in its gradual moulding which will relieve it of its misdirected trends.

Usually people initially aim at stopping even the normal working of the mind so as to create a state of coma or insensibility. The gurus of today also, in their eagerness to create an impression upon people, apply similar methods which as a matter of fact take us quite away from the range of spirituality. Their followers too, having lost their sense of discrimination, are incapable of

judging it in its various shades and colours. They grow fond of colourfulness alone, and for their mechanical minds they require only a mechanic guide to lead them on by mechanical means. The result is that they remain held up forever within the charms of their mechanical output. But they alone are not to be blamed for it. Really they have got saturated with the stunning effect of the slow poison administered into them from platforms by the colourful preachers who pose as saintly and world teachers of religion. The result is that they get addicted to different kinds of intoxication created by the use of certain drugs and ritualistic charms. The teachers also infuse into their followers the same intoxicating effect which, being suited to the taste of their senses, is greatly relished. Such is the condition of the teacher and also that of the taught - the one soaked in the feeling of self importance and pride, while the other is drowned in his desire for sense enjoyment, which they grossly misinterpret as a state of anandam. The sphere of spirituality in fact starts from beyond the range of the senses and, frankly speaking, I may say that a guru who has not transcended the limits of the senses is not at all a guru in the true sense. He can impart nothing but torpidity which, as a spiritual state, is horrible even to imagine.

At lower stages in Natural Path one often does feel a sort

of absorption, similar in a way to that of slight intoxication, but it is definitely different from the state of torpidity mentioned above. This condition may more appropriately be expressed as a blissful state of calmness, unstrained by the weighty effect of the senses which the abhyasi feels himself completely dissociated from. This may, however, be denoted as the soul dance which is a high type of dance. When a dancer gets completely absorbed in the dance, it comes at par with the dance of Lord Krishna, which possessed the merit of driving the onlookers into a state of ecstasy. But this type of dance is now quite unknown and obsolete. The ancient books also do not make any reference to it in clear terms. The Tandava dance of Siva, though not exactly the same, was much akin to it, but it was of a grosser type.

Sadhana has two aspects, one the abhyas and the other the Master's help. Abhyas is meant only for creating inner conditions which will be helpful to the abhyasi in attracting the flow of the Divine grace, and this involves one's self-effort. But self-effort alone is not sufficient. It must be supplemented by the Master's support. As a matter of fact what we really stand in need of for our ultimate purpose is only Divine grace. But owing to one's inner complexities, it is almost beyond the capacity of a sadhaka to have it by himself. For that reason Master's help is indispensable. In earlier stages Divine grace

flows into the abhyasi only through the medium of the Master. As such it is often interpreted as Master's grace. Whether it comes through the Master's medium or direct it is the same Divine grace in both the cases. So long as the abhyasi is incapable of having it direct, it rests on the Master to bless him with it. When he has developed the capacity to draw it direct, the Master's job is practically over, though even then he has to keep a watchful eye on him for the sake of safeguard. This is in fact the real function of a true Master.

Now the Master's support being an essential feature of sadhana, it becomes incumbent upon the abhyasi to seek a worthy guide to lead him on, helping him by his power transmitted through the yogic process of Pranahuti. This is the only effective means for bringing about the desired result. Under Natural Path the Divine grace is directed towards the abhyasi through the process of Pranahuti. As a matter of fact what Pranahuti does for the spiritual uplift of the abhyasi in the shortest possible time, independent efforts cannot do even in a full decade. Serious difficulties often arise when meditation is practiced independently in accordance with the old methods prescribed in books. Under the old system of abhyas one has to keep on struggling with the mind in order to stop its unceasing activities. The struggle continues all the time without any success in the real

sense. Thus practically there is no meditation at all, and all the time is lost in mere struggling and suppressing mental modifications. In order to overcome this very great difficulty, under the Natural Path system we simply connect ourselves with the power of the Master whose mind has become thoroughly disciplined and regulated. His power then begins to flow into the individual, regulating his mental tendencies. Pranahuti is therefore of primary value in giving the abhyasi surest success. Our tiring labour for ages and lives can be saved only when, by God's grace, we are able to get a Master capable of helping us through Pranahuti. I therefore advise you in all earnestness to seek for such a one for your guide. They are, however, rare but definitely they are there, and a true seeker if he is really in earnest can never fail to trace one out.

I do not hereby mean advocate in any way the orthodox idea of gurudom which to my view is nothing but mental slavery. In our system we have it in the form of common brotherhood with a spirit of mutual love, service and sacrifice which are the very essentials of the pursuit. We strongly condemn the idea of personal service demanded by gurus on the grounds that thereby the followers shall be developing pious samskaras in them. On the other hand we uphold the view that a teacher, acting in a spirit of service, should himself serve the disciple not only

spiritually but also physically if the need arises.

The selection of the proper guide or guru is the next point to be taken into consideration. The guru's job being the most significant and invaluable factor of spiritual life, it is absolutely necessary that due precaution be taken to select the right type of man for the guide. The slightest error in this matter may often prove highly disastrous. God alone is in fact the real guide or guru, and we all get light from Him alone. But only he who has cleaned his heart to that extent feels it coming therefrom, while a common man engrossed deeply in material complexities feels it not. He, therefore, stands in need of one of his fellow beings of high calibre to help him in that direction. We may call him guide, guru, master or by whatever name we like, but he is after all a helper and a supporter, working in the spirit of service and sacrifice. His role is by far the most important, for it is he who, as a matter of fact, pulls the real seeker up and enlivens him with the light which is lying in him under layers of grossness. The light thus awakened begins first to cast its reflection upon outer coverings and removes grossness and impurities therefrom. By and by it goes on developing, affecting the deeper layers also. The light can, however, be awakened by independent efforts as well, but that requires persistent labour for many years together. For this reason association with a worthy guide

is of immense value to the abhyasi, since the Master too, is duty bound, keeps on removing obstructions and impediments on the path.

If a guru comes out into the field as a Master, puffed up with feelings of greatness and superiority, it is Obvious that he has usurped the position of the real Master - God. As such it is quite definite that he cannot benefit others to the required extent. It is, therefore, essential for him to think of himself as a humble being, and act in the spirit of love and service. He must completely devote himself to the service of his fellow beings both individually and collectively. The service may be physical as well as spiritual. Spiritual service he must always be occupied with, physical service too he must ever be ready to perform if needed. He must be thoroughly devoid of feelings of greatness, self-importance and pride. He must not be a mere preacher of theories but a practical man who has traversed the entire distance up to the final limit of human approach and has completely merged in the state of Infinity. Such a man alone can be the fittest to act as guru or Master to take the abhyasi along the path of spirituality. In that case the spiritual force keeps on radiating automatically all the time from him and affecting those around him. But such special beings are Nature's gift to the world. They come into the world only at Nature's will to work as a medium for Nature's work.

Such a high soul is to be sought for if possible and available; otherwise one must get himself attached to the next highest personality available and accessible. By merging himself in his expansion, the abhyasi can acquire corresponding expansion for himself.

Every saint or yogi has his own expansion up to a limit, great or small. But when the seeker's thought is firmly fixed upon Divinity, Divine force thus enlivened in him brings about the greatest expansion. At lower levels the expansion is less. In our sanstha every abhyasi has his own limit of expansion which is in accordance with capacity developed by him. For establishing a direct connection with the Divine it is therefore absolutely essential for an abhyasi to connect himself with the greatest personality of the type in existence at the time. The attainment of a perfect Being is, in other words, the attainment of God, and the scriptures too support this view. If such a type of personality is not accessible at the time, then the only proper course would be to connect himself with one who is duly connected with the great personality, for, when the best is out of reach, the second best must be approached.

A master of the highest calibre is indispensable for another reason also. In our spiritual march we proceed

from point to point, crossing from one point to another after covering the intervening spaces known as buffers. These intervening spaces are to be crossed in order to gain access to the next point. But while crossing them it is necessary to take a thorough tour through the entire space in order to complete its experience - bhoga. No further ascent can in any way be possible without it. Now if one tries to attempt it by mere self effort he gets hopelessly involved in its intricacies and remains held up indefinitely within it. There may, however, be exceptions, but they are very very rare and that too only when one is specially gifted with an extraordinary calibre and is favoured with the Divine grace. Now the power that can take us safely along through all those intricacies can definitely be of one who has established an irrevocable connection with the Divine source. Is it not thus necessary to have him for the purpose? Definitely, yes. Whether you call him your master (or your servant, he is after all your teacher and guide or, in the popular sense, a guru, no matter in whatever capacity you might take him.

The buffers or the intervening spaces between points are innumerable. They are all to be passed through during the course of our journey. With the help of a worthy master of calibre the process of bhoga is considerably reduced and the abhyasi's stay at these places is much

shortened, saving thereby a lot of time and energy. It may however seem somewhat strange and unnatural as to how bhoga gets ineffective in the presence of the guru's support. The fact is that the condition of the place where the abhyasi is staying entraps him completely, forming a sort of network round him. Unless that is shattered the higher ascent is out of question. By mere self effort one might at times advance a little, but only to slip down again. Practical observation goes to show that most of the sages so far have not been able to cross these buffers except perhaps only a few of the early ones. They remained lingering indefinitely in the one or the other without finding a way out. The simple reason for that could possibly have been lack of proper capability and calibre on the part of their guru to clear it for them by his own superior power. Those depending upon their self effort alone remain held up at the very first or the second stage. How the necessity for bhoga does not arise when having the Master's support is not very difficult to understand. Really bhoga refers not only to the undergoing of the effects of past doings but also to the undoing of the effect of the network one has got entangled in. Only when that is torn off is the abhyasi able to go up to the next point, and that is possible only with the help of the Master.

The purpose for which I have taken up this point is to

clear the wrong impression held by certain people that it is possible for one to conduct one's spiritual training by oneself. That may be possible only to a certain limited extent, and that too when one is gifted with special capabilities. Beyond that it is quite impossible and impracticable. The only solution can, therefore, be to seek the help of one of the fellow beings who is really capable.

The selection of a worthy guru is no doubt a very difficult job. On the basis of my personal experience I may give you an easy method of judging the worth. When you happen to come into contact with one, try to understand whether his association promotes in you a feeling of peace and calmness, and whether the restless tendencies of mind get silenced at least for the time being, without causing any weighty effect upon the mind. If it is so you must conclude that he can be a fit person to lead you on the path.

There is another difficulty as well. It is that even though such a master is available and accessible he is not usually trusted unless he displays some striking miracle. A Raja Yogi endowed with the power of transmission can no doubt display miracles, but he never likes to do so since that will be derogatory to his pious position.

Moreover practical experience thoroughly proves that miracles are of no account at all, since they do not promote real faith in any way. We have the example of Christ before us, who displayed miracles all his life. But in spite of all that he got only twelve disciples amongst whom there was even one who subsequently contrived to bring about his crucifixion. That shows that his miracles were of no avail in promoting faith among people. It was in fact his noble teaching alone that afterwards secured for him such a large following. It is, therefore, better and in our best interest to have our eyes fixed upon Reality rather than upon miracles which are undoubtedly very petty affairs, and can be displayed by persons of inferior attainments and common talents. Miracle is no criterion for a saint or a yogi. It is, on the other hand, a deliberate fraud played by dexterous gurus upon the weak and credulous people to entrap them in their fold of gurudom. Before deciding, about the final selection, one must be fully convinced of the man's capabilities and merits with regard to his practical attainments on the path. For this one must have continued association with him to judge things through perception and experience in a practical way. When one is thus convinced, one must then trust him in good faith and rely upon him firmly. This is very essential for a successful pursuit. By and by faith, the most lively factor of a spiritual life, begins to develop in one, and the Master's form becomes predominant in his

view with his remembrance in the background. Master's remembrance is an important factor in overcoming the distraction of thoughts, and it is indispensable for easy success. When remembrance is there, the remembered must also be there close by. This leads the abhyasi to a plane where he feels himself knocking at the doors of the Beloved. When the Beloved is convinced that it is a devoted seeker knocking at the door He will Himself come to the door to take him in. In that way the limitations that bar our passage break off and we find access up to him. But we can have full understanding of it only when we have experienced it in a practical way. At this stage one begins to imbibe godly attributes. That means we have then come into the sunshine which comes down from the main Source. We have thus come up to the Source. We are now in the ocean of Infinity and our swimming commences. Everything is now gone and remembrance, having been transformed into the subtlest state of surrender supplemented by silent craving and dormant restlessness, is now the only means left to us. The state is completely devoid of charm or taste, but there is a peculiar attraction in it to the extent that one would not like to part with it even for a moment. For myself I shall never be prepared to barter it even for my life. It is, however, the beginning of Reality where even purity, peace and bliss are extinct.

Now if one person gets absorbed in God and another in His material manifestation, what will each of them attain? The one, the Reality and the other the imitation? Can God be blamed for that? Certainly not. The Divine flow is the same in both the cases, but each of them partakes of it in accordance with his capacity and merit. I feel myself one with all my associates, being attached to the same common Master, God, without the slightest idea of being high or low, great or small. As a matter of fact one in the human form, though considered to be big or great in respect of humanity, may be really the smallest. In fact his very smallness may itself constitute his greatness, though in his personal capacity he may be no more than a zero. The zero has its own importance, since when added to a number it raises its value ten times. This is what devotion may finally bring us up to.

My heart is offered as a playground for you all, never mind whether one uses it as a recreation ground for his amusement or as a dreary waste for him to wander madly in. Let him use it in any way he likes. It is free for every one to settle in, a place where one might see his own reflection, while another sees that of the Beloved. Uniformity is the characteristic of Nature and every one has his due share of it. God is known to be both samavarthi and samadarshi. A real Master too must have his heart full with the feelings of uniformity, otherwise he

is not worthy of the job at all.