

Physical and mental troubles do not tell upon spirituality

(Craving of the soul, Showers of Divine Grace, page 163 4th Edition.)

My pranams at the holy feet of the Master and to all...

The statement of the seminar, 'Physical and mental troubles do not tell upon spirituality' depicts one of the basic stages of sadhana.

In the initial days of abhyas, we think that this is something that Master has stated and might be true, we have to experience/imperience it; or, we may be thinking yes – this is a state that I would like to be in but I am not there yet.

In order that we feel this stage that the Rev. Master has stated, in our heart, there are a few pre-requisites required:

Goal Clarity – We can determine the goal of our life by asking ourselves some of the following questions:

- What is it that I seek in my life? Or What is it that I want to spend my efforts achieving? –
 - Is it a life of abundance, or comforts?
 - Is it a life spent in helping others?
 - Is it a life becoming someone to whom people look to for guidance?
- Do I know what to seek? –
 - Will what I want to seek give me the satisfaction of a life well lived at the end of my life? or will it leave me with a lot of regrets?
 - Will what I seek give me purpose for my life or leave me feeling empty at the end of my life?

These are just some of the ways in which we can introspect to develop understanding of what should be the goal of life.

Most of us are unaware of what is the goal that we should seek and how to go about working towards achieving that goal. For most of us life just happens without any awareness of where we are going in life. We are like the leaves and twigs floating on the surface of a flowing river.

Once we question ourselves on the goal of our life, we get into introspection and a bit of goal clarity starts to emerge.

We the followers of Natural Path know that there should be only one goal of life and that is to return to the homeland.

The problem arises when we feel the push and pull of grihastha life. We feel that others are an obstacle to our sadhana as we are a slave of their wishes. We refuse to acknowledge that it is our samskaras that have given us the company of those people in our life; so, the problems that we see in our life because we have to fulfil the wishes of others, are our samskaras; and our efforts or attention are due towards those people in our life.

Rev. Master has firmly stated that this system is for grihasthas and our dear Master being a grihastha himself knew the challenges of the life of a grihastha. It is in this very life that we have to seek Him and secure our return to the Homeland.

Faith – Rev. Master in the article ‘Faith’ in Reality at Dawn, details the three pillars on which our faith should stand if we wish to reach the Ultimate.

A person should have faith in the goal that he/she has chosen for themselves and be absolutely certain that the goal should be the Absolute and nothing else.

The person should also have faith in the means chosen to reach the goal. In case the means are inferior to the goal or can not facilitate a person to reach the goal, the individual should employ the means that will take him to the desired goal.

For such a subtle goal, the means employed should be in accordance, subtle.

The person should put his full faith in a proper guide who will help him/her reach the goal using the means employed towards the goal.

We all come from different families and different strata of the society and we all definitely have our faith in something prior to coming under the care of Rev. Master. To transfer that faith to faith in the Master takes some time. The experiences and imperiences in our life, after we take up sadhana help us in solidifying that faith in the Master.

Love and Devotion – As our faith in the Master develops, our love and devotion towards the Master also deepens. This is directly powered by the craving to reach the ultimate, within us. If we truly crave to be with the Master, our future and our path align to help us in our journey towards Him. Rev. Master has mentioned that our path gets smoother in proportion to our love and devotion to the Master. All these things are happening in real life and therefore take a lot of time to unfold and manifest. We think that love and devotion come easily or by saying that I am devoted or I love the Master. However, it takes time to pick up these qualities by diligently practicing the system.

All these qualities are hidden within us when we start our sadhana, however with diligent sadhana, these qualities get refined within us and come to the fore.

In the beginning of our sadhana, even without any clarity on the above three things, namely Goal, Faith and Love and Devotion, if we submit ourselves to the Master and do our abhyas diligently and sincerely, we get clarity on these qualities. Just as a jeweller polishes a piece of rough diamond into a thing of beauty; Master polishes each abhyasi into a seeker to walk confidently on the path towards the goal.

Let us observe the sentence prior to the topic of the seminar, ‘There can be no breakdown in spirituality, if faith and desire for the ultimate is there.’ Here Rev. Master has used the words faith and desire. We know that faith is a preliminary state to surrender and desire is an inferior state to aspiration. So, why has Master used these words? We know that the Master will not say anything that is incorrect. He is saying here that even if we have the basic faith and a desire (not of a very high order) towards the Ultimate, there can be no breakdown in spirituality. If we think this statement through, we feel within that this is a very big statement given by the Master and it fills our hearts with hope.

Armed with these pre-requisites, we live our lives in consonance with what Master states namely, following the meditational practices, practising constant remembrance and following the commandments and we start moving on the path.

As we progress on the path, we pick up the qualities of:

Courage - We think we are courageous to face whatever comes in our lives, however, here the courage required is to face our own samskaras. This is a very tall ask and fills us with trepidation. As

we progress, we are going through a process of unlearning as well as going through our own samskaras. This courage comes to us when we do our sadhana diligently having faith in the Master.

Yielding to the Divine – This can be misunderstood very easily in life. We always believe that in our life, we are not rigid and we yield; however, yielding to the Divine is a lesson learnt by the hardest means. Yielding to the divine does not only mean accepting something which is not to our liking; it also means seeing His will in everything and accepting it unequivocally. The understanding that after putting in the efforts, we get most of the materialistic things but not spiritual values is an understanding that comes to us after repeated cycles of experiences/imperiences of the same kind which leave the network of our thoughts and notions, destroyed and threadbare. This is a gem that is earned after a lot of sadhana.

Equipped now with these spiritual qualities, as we live our lives we start feeling the grace of the Master.

If we were to introspect, we can easily say that we would like to aver confidently that yes, 'Physical and mental troubles do not tell upon spirituality'. However, there is a gap and that is because of our gaps in understanding the essence of the goal clarity that we should have, the faith in the Master and the love and devotion that we should have towards the Master.

Our current dispensation is the result of our conditioning on how we view the troubles that come in our life, our samskaras and the way we have used our free will in our life till now.

We have been conditioned to lead a life of comforts and to avoid problems both in the physical and mental planes of our existence. Therefore, whenever we face any trouble, our first reaction is how to best avoid it or get rid of it as soon as possible. We are, in short, always reactive in our approach towards any troubles that come our way. As we start doing our sadhana diligently and we start to realize that Master is our one true friend, we start viewing the troubles as ways to get rid of our samskaras and as a result we do not view them as something to be avoided. This shift in our thinking improves our compliance to the commandments 5, 6 and 7. This also gives us the courage to face the uncertainties of life as we now are quietly equipped with the knowledge and understanding that He is a samavarthi.

As we go through different stages of life, we have different needs, wants and desires. We work towards fulfilling our needs, limit our wants and desires so that we can use our free will for nourishing our soul.

Many a times we face reverses in our life on different fronts; understanding that what we get is what we deserve in spite of our efforts, is a clarity that is earned by each abhyasi individually in his/her own heart. Having faith in the Master, knowing the Master as a samavarthi and fully understanding that what He has planned for me is good for me gives one a freedom that is rare. This is an essential quality that needs to be picked up in our sadhana in our march towards our goal.

One more essential quality to be developed in us as abhyasis, is submitting to His will in our lives and to become 'Living Dead' in His hands.

In any aspect of our life, we put in the required efforts, submit the efforts to Him and let go of any expectation on the result. The acceptance of the fact that the result may or may not be as one visualizes or expects, requires a lot of forbearance and tenacity to be on the path. I have observed that submitting our inability to submit to Him, in our bedtime prayers, also bears fruit.

Submitting to His will does not mean resorting to inaction. It means putting in the requisite efforts with full sincerity, attributing the efforts to Him and withdrawing any expectation of any result on the efforts put in, helps us understand yielding to His will. Most of the times, we don't know what would be Master's will in a particular situation, then we put in our efforts and withdraw and wait. What happens after that is His will.

Once we detach from the results of our actions, we move a few steps ahead on the path. We gradually develop equanimity in handling the results of our efforts. We do not take failure of our efforts as His will, let go and choose inaction. Rather, we look for possibilities in other directions which we have probably missed. This brings us a steadiness to our lives and we start depending more and more on the Master. All negativity goes away; we start living life as it is meant to be lived and we start putting our feet firmly on the path towards to goal.

Now failures do not overwhelm us for we know He has a plan for us. We learn how to make our will subservient to His will by following the commandments, practicing constant remembrance and looking within more and more.

Once He becomes our sakha to whom we turn to all the time, we can then confidently say that yes, Physical and mental troubles do not tell upon spirituality. We needn't know how far the goal is or how is the path towards Him as long as we feel His presence with us all the time. Then life becomes a beautiful journey towards Him, with Him.

Pranams,