

## Gems From the Garland of Letters

[Letters of Bhagwan Kishori Mohan]

(5)

16<sup>th</sup> Poush, 1345 (Bengali)

Kashidham

Dear Kshitish,

I have received your letter. Here is the answer to your question — there are three fundamental paths to spiritual penance.

1. Bhakti Yoga (The Devotional Yogic Path): Salvation may be obtained through prayers and worship of God. Patanjali says, “Ishwar Pranidhana tva pare pratyek chetanadhigamah apyantaraya bhavascha” — self-realization blossoms and the nine types of obstacles to the yogic path (Illness, Dullness, Doubt, Negligence, Laziness, Cravings, Misperceptions, Failure and Instability) withers away. Liberation through this path may be obtained by those possessing unflinching devotion to God. Such a devotee becomes completely surrendered to God and can no more perform anything through self-will. Whatever he achieves spiritually — meditation, dissolution or liberation, is obtained through the grace of God. The true devotee survives with an unwavering surrender and dependence; with steadfast belief that God delivers them through each and every event in life. The Bhagavat Gita has says,

“*Teshamaha Samudhartta mrityu sansara sagarat, Bhavami nachirat-partha myyaveshita chetasam.*” (12/7)

Meaning: I carry them across the worldly ocean of samsara, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), their minds and hearts being set on me.

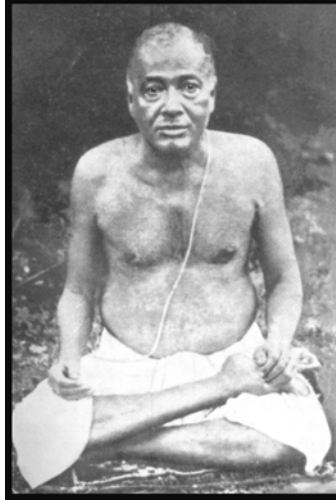
“*Tesham - evanukam - partha mahamagyanajam tamah, Nashayamyatma-bhavastho gyan dipen bhaswata.*” (10/11)

Meaning: Out of pure compassion for them, I, abiding in their hearts, destroy the darkness of ignorance with shining lamp of wisdom.

2. Ashtanga Yoga (The Eight-Fold Yogic Path): Until the mind obtains the spontaneous élan of remaining ever steadfast in a state of unwavering tranquility indifferent of all external perturbations, the path of Kriya-yoga comprising of spiritual-penance (*Tapah*), the self-contemplation (*Swadhyay*) and the divine-surrender (*Pranidhan*) becomes the principal yogic practice methodology. Here, holy-discipline or *swadhyay* refers to the study of spiritual liberating scriptures and the continuous and repeated contemplation and / or utterance (*japa*) of *Pranava*,

the primordial expressive form of the absolute self and the seed of Creation. Divine-surrender (*Ishwar-Pranidhan*) denotes devotion to God and when a continually still concentration is achieved through the sacrifice of all actions and its associated fruits to God, one should practice meditation on the self. The mind now transcends beyond the dualistic prayers of Bhakti Yoga and hence is not required any more.

3. Gyan Yoga (The Knowledge Driven Yogic Path): When the mind becomes



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purified through this discipline, its nature of divine truth-lit exposition and reasoning (*Viveka*) arises. Then he analyses and reasons about what within his perceived ambient nature forms part of his own true self (*Atma*) and what fall outside this realm (*Anatma*). Further, achieving enlightenment with the ultimate realization of his own soul (*Atma*) being one and same with the Universal-Soul (*Paramatma*) through self-contemplation and self-meditation, such a person obtains liberation. Until the knowledge of the true self blossoms within, no path can lead to liberation – “*Nanyaha pantha vidyate ayanaya*”. According to Shruti, this path of spiritual penance is primarily driven by self-will. Spiritual knowledge and liberation is attained through reasoning by the *viveka* within the completely purified mind. Surrender to God is not the principal facet here. However, those whose minds have not been completely internalized and freed from the delusive power of distraction (*Rajah-sukha*), should partially pursue the path of prayer and worship. Absolute surrender cannot be obtained through penance driven by self-will, although, traces of self-will help circumvent yogic obstacles and inclination towards spiritual endeavor. This is the reason why many pursuers of the knowledge-driven path pray and perform worship of God on a particular day of the week. The path of knowledge becomes effortless, its harshness eases out.

God is the universal guide (*Jagat-Guru*) towards the attainment of self-realization.

Patanjali says, “*Sa purveshamapi guru kalenan-vechhedat*”. He is the Guru even of the Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It is He who advises all spiritual aspirants residing within the physical embodiments of the Gurus of this physical world. This is why the maxims of the spiritual scriptures (*Shastras*) advise Gurus to be beheld as God (*Ishwar*) and not as human beings. In the *Kali Yuga*, people are very commonly devoid of self-restraint, hence, prayers and worship through *bhakti yoga* is the prescribed path for them. My advice towards you all fundamentally encompasses the principles of the knowledge driven path conducted through self-will and not worship through *bhakti yoga*. However, as you bow down to your Guru, you should similarly bow down to God as your very own revered Guru. Even the enlightened one after complete liberation from bondage bows down to the Guru as a generic convention. Study the substance presented in this letter and progress in your spiritual penance accordingly. The one and the only one is all pervading (*Ekam-advitiyam*).

Yours,

Kishori Mohan

My best wishes to you, Shriman Raja, Shriman Baby and Shriman Amarendra. Sarala, do keep a copy of these instructions.

(From the book titled “*Brihat Kishori Bhagavat*” by Late Sri Amarendra Ch.

Syam)

**Translated into English by**

**-Her Blessed Child Sri Arnab Sarkar**

*Seekest thou God? Then see Him in man; His divinity is manifest more in man than in any other object. Man is the greatest manifestation of God.*

**-Paramahansa Sri Ramkrishna**