

Gems From the Garland of Letters
[Letters of Bhagwan Kishori Mohan]
Importance of the Path of Devotion in Kaliyuga
(12)

Brahman cannot be restricted within the confines of an embodiment, form or senses. He does not have eyes, still He beholds; neither does He have ears, but still He listens. The *Shruti* says, “*Pashyatya-chakshuh, Shrinotyakarnah.*” Pervading everywhere at all times, His cognition registers even the minutest perturbations in the universal or individualistic state of consciousness. He is ever-enlightened and ever-liberated; neither has there ever been even a moment in the past when He was shackled in bondage, nor will there ever be an instant in future when He may possibly be constrained by limitation. As is His manifestation eternal, so are His powers and might; as is He limitless, so is the supremacy of His splendor and magnificence. It is beyond the ability of any individual to completely fathom and characterize the grandeur of His existence.

This is it for a brief overview. He is beyond the vices of ruthlessness and favouritism. The observed discrepancy in destiny and fortune is only due to the disparity in the nature of committed actions of different individuals; Brahman acts as the divine, universal, uniform and impartial resolver and bestower of the fruits of committed actions.

Contemplate firmly on these facets. Never ever imagine that He is uninformed about your earnest prayers; never imagine that He is merciless or partial. The *Brahman* is ever unblemished and flawless. Hence, never hold Him liable for the turn of your fate. The Bhagwat Gita says, “*Nirdoshang Hi Samang Brahma.*” He is omniscient of the past, present and future. Everybody who prays with devotion and surrender receives His merciful grace; hence, you will also receive the same. You have already

experienced glimpses of His divine grace. In future, you will receive more.

Aspirants of the *Bhaktimarg* (the path of devotion) should either perform *pranav-japa* (*pranav* refers to the holy syllable *Om*; repeated utterance of the syllable *Om*) or *japa* of a divine name (*naam mantra*) conjoined with *pranav*. One must develop affinity towards contemplation and meditation and remain ever aware of his divine existence. The inclination towards the study of scriptures, maxims, verses and listening to pieces which elaborate on the principles of devotion should be nurtured. The devotee should associate with other devotees and separate from the atheists and the ill-natured. He should sing and listen to devotional songs which praise God's divine nature, name, pastimes and grandeur.

The devotee may adopt any of the five emotive-principles (*bhava*) while conducting his devotional service towards God. The five emotive-principles are as follows:

1. *Shanta*: characterized by the principle of steadfast serenity and calmness,
2. *Dasya*: characterized by the principle of resolute reverence-filled selfless servitude,
3. *Sakhya*: characterized by principle of the unflinching faith-lit bond of friendship,
4. *Vatsalya*: characterized by the principle of the intense adore, concern and care of the protective parent.
5. *Madhurya*: characterized by the principle of absolute unhesitating love-lit surrender of the consort

Among these, *Madhurya* is considered to be the supreme. This form of devotional service was practiced by the *Braja-gopis* (the maidens of *Vrindavan*). If none of these *Bhavas* seem suitable, then you may devote yourself as the disciple of God, considering

Him to be your spiritual master (*Guru*). He is the *Guru* and preceptor of even *Brahma* (the God of creation) and also the *Guru* of destiny. Therefore, the *Guru-bhava* may also be considered to be an outstanding approach. Later, as you progress, your penance will be governed and guided by God.

Ecstatic tears, thrilled shivering, sweat, goose-bumps etc. are the external symptoms of *bhakti bhava*.

There are numerous Bhagwan Kishori Mohan established paths of spiritual penance including the eight-fold path of *Ashtanga-yoga*, contemplation of the self as the manifestation of *Brahman* in *gyan-yoga*, etc. Individuals may choose the path which best suits his mentality and taste.

All the renowned paths are correct and lead to the absolute Truth. However, irrespective of the path followed, all spiritual practitioners should regularly spend some time in the devotional service of God along with the study of scriptures which praise the Lord's divine name. Otherwise, spiritual penance becomes dull and monotonous. Drenched in the sweet nectar of devotion, penance transforms into an amicable, pleasant and enjoyable journey. In this manner, aspirants of all paths will be able to receive traces of God's divine grace. God is ever willing and ushering everybody with unfolded hands to receive the ambrosia of His merciful benevolence.

One must tread the path up to His door and beg for His mercy like the helpless blind, the lame and the beggar. Nobody ever



returns empty-handed from His door provided the seeker's prayers are honest and earnest. The current times are favourable towards obtaining the Almighty's grace. Just modest effort ushers in His benevolent mercy. He demands nothing but devotion and faith. Therefore, you need not offer Him anything but the sanctity of your devotional service.

While crafting you as a human being, He has poured in your nature drops of the divine qualities of devotion and faith. Hence, approach Him with whatever all He has given you. Within a little while, this tiny drop of devotion will transform into intense waves of divine bliss. Soaked in His blissful grace, the devotee remains ever immersed in devotional-necture (*Bhakti-Rasa*) and becomes completely indifferent of the external materialistic world; sometimes he laughs in his own delightful ecstasy, or cries profusely in the pathos of divine separation, or shouts insanely and rambles in his delirium etc. Unable to fathom the depths of the different ecstatic spiritual emotions of a devotee, the general masses tend to analyze their actions superficially and usually arrive at incorrect judgments. Never criticize and superficially opine about the actions of a devotee. Instead, one should extend a supportive and gracious attitude towards him. This is because whoever is congenial and cordial with a devotee becomes God's loved one. God considers the devotional service and prayer extended to a devotee as his own worship and becomes immensely pleased.

What more can I speak about the glory of the devotee – God Himself turns into a

servant of a true devotee; it seems as if He wishes to endow His entire universal kingdom to the devotee and Himself become the devotee's servant. The glory of *bhakti* has been expressed in such high terms in the scriptures. Those practitioners of the *bhakti-marga*, the strength of whose devotion and faith is highly intense, do not require practicing any other yogic procedures; in fact, these procedures act as obstacles in his spiritual path. Many verses within the *Bhagwat-gita* prescribe such dedicated unwavering penance through *bhakti-yoga* alone. In *bhakti-yoga*, dedication refers to the sole refuge and surrender in God. Therefore, adopting any other means will only distract the mind from its state of committed and absolute dedication.

The words, "*Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekaam sharanam vraja*" [Bhagwat Gita 18:66; Meaning: Give up all other duties and surrender unto Me) has a profound and broad implication. One must take sole refuge of God in all aspects of life, be it material or spiritual. This requires firm perseverance, continuous contemplation and resolute awareness of His divine existence at all times and in each action. Those who are deficient in the quality of patience will not be able to progress in the path of *bhakti*. Faith, devotion and perseverance act as the three principal pillars of this path.

Patience must not be lost at the initial stages. Understanding the universal creative principles of God and realizing that the entire universe is a manifestation of His divine will, firmly establish yourself in devotion and faith. ...to be continued

—Her blessed child, **Sri Arnab Sarkar**

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

Mahatma Gandhi