



The Vision

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DEDICATED TO UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

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ANANDASHRAM, PO ANANDASHRAMA 671531, INDIA




Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas (1884-1963)

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

THE POWER OF NAME

 ing on His name with love and joy,
And sweetness will permeate your being.

Look up to Him in all your trials,
And you will have inner courage and light.
Know He dwells in all and He is all,
And you will be blessed with the vision
That you and He are one.

— **Swami Ramdas**



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FROM THE EDITOR

ife brings a series of ups and downs in its wake. We have often been told by Mahatmas that the purpose of life is to realise our True Nature, which is oneness with everyone and everything. Then, what is the purpose of these ups and downs that beset our path? Do they really have any purpose? Our Gurudev, Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas, said, “Ram’s tests are at all times coming unawares. One should always be prepared for them and face all vicissitudes calmly and in complete resignation to His will. Then there is no sorrow, no disappointment, no fear of any kind.”

Pondering over these words makes us recall that as children, when we attended school, we were given homework by our teachers to enable us to assimilate what was taught. How then did we and our teacher assess the level of our assimilation? Hence, the examinations and tests. These tests were the touchstones of our academic progress.

When we apply this logic to the ups and downs of life, we can understand that they too are the touchstones of our spiritual progress. Acharya Vinobaji explained it most appropriately in the following words: “The true nature of our mind, the

real quality of our mind, is revealed through outward work. Water in a pond appears clear, but throw a stone in it and the dirt settled at the bottom will immediately rise up. That happens with our mind too. There are heaps of dirt at the bottom of the mind's lake. They come to the surface when disturbed by an external agent. When a man gets angry, it is not that the anger comes from without; it was already there within him. Otherwise, it could never have shown itself."

We have been blessed to listen to, read and dwell upon spiritual teachings of various saints. The tests provided by the all-merciful Lord are the "stones" thrown to check the purification that has taken place through Sadhana. The tests of ups and downs in our life are the way the Divine assesses the unfoldment of the spiritual values within us. We need to be vigilant and know that He is gauging us at every moment and hence we need to pray to Him to help us pass these tests at every juncture.

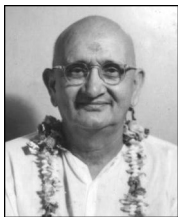
May the articles in this month's issue of THE VISION inspire us to introspect and gauge how we have fared in our tests, and seek His intervention at every step in our spiritual journey so that we may never stumble or falter. □

— **Editor**

THE WAY OF THE SADHAKA

By Swami Ramdas

The seeker of Truth should bear in mind that his progress on the spiritual path depends upon his earnestness and sincerity. Love should be the light he holds in hand.



Honesty and rectitude should be the staff and bowl he possesses. No purpose is served by calling oneself a devotee if one's life is not imbued with a spirit of service and goodwill towards humanity. What he should studiously avoid is the invasion of conceit and pride into his heart.

Many an aspirant has either fallen back on the path or his march is arrested by the obsession of an egoistic consciousness that he is great and perfect, and, therefore, he is above his fellow beings. It is rightly said, if you take a position of elevation and height, there is the likelihood of a fall; whereas, if you feel lowly and humble, there is security and stability of your position. So, meekness is one of the great virtues to be cultivated by the aspirant.

God teaches men in various ways. When a devotee is seized with weakness of any kind, God

sees that it is removed and he is granted strength and peace.

Love should so thoroughly illumine the devotee's heart that he looks upon all things with an equal sight, eliminating entirely from it the sense of superiority.

After all, the span of life of every being on this earth is measured and very short. To make the best of such a life is to live it in simplicity, cheerfulness and freedom, divested of all unnatural burdens ignorance has imposed on it.

There is no greater handicap for the spiritual aspirant than his posing as a great man because he has developed some good qualities or advanced to some extent on the Divine path. If you wish to enjoy the immortal felicity from the realization of your Divine nature, you should approach that state with a complete nakedness, as it were, of your soul. Don't seek to reach the Eternal with a heavy load of petty desires and ambitions, worries and anxieties, vanity and arrogance, and other undesirable frailties hanging on to you. Be frank, truthful, light, effable and smiling. Gravity, long face, toughness and a consciousness of self-importance do not go with a life dedicated to the Divine.


If you rely on God and trust Him implicitly and have His sweet Name on your lips, you may be sure, your life will flow like a rippling river singing the song of eternal love and joy. The above enumerated excrescences that have gathered round your life and have made its outlook vitiated, narrow and cramped will automatically disappear. Your life will become pure, noble, enlightened and glorious in every way. God will take His seat in your heart and hold the reins of it. He will be your Inspirer, Guide and Protector. He will take you on the royal road of absolute peace and happiness. You are safe in His keeping. His grace will sustain you and you will realise that you are His immortal child — an embodiment of His radiance power and bliss. Let your aim be to attain this beatific state. □

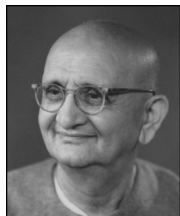


Cheer up! Cheer up! We are safe in the keeping of the Almighty Lord. He may test us in various ways. But He never abandons us. ...Evil is only apparent. In the bosom of all events and things, there live, in crystal purity, Divine love and grace.

— Swami Ramdas

WORDS OF BELOVED PAPA SWAMI RAMDAS

ri Rama, we may say, had to undergo the trials and difficulties of forest life for fourteen years as a result of his *Karma*. Suppose we take it that way. If *Karma* had affected



him, it would have made his life miserable. When he was wandering through the forests without sleep for days, exposed to all kinds of dangers and privations, he reconciled himself to them and took everything in the best spirit and was always uncomplaining, cheerful and happy. He teaches how we should submit to adverse circumstances without a murmur of complaint or resentment. He took everything that came to him in the right spirit. That is the way we can put up with all unpleasant situations in which we are placed. But we make ourselves miserable because we want things to take place as we wish. In all conditions we should submit to God. Never grumble, never complain, never be sorry. If this is our attitude towards all happenings, we will be free. We cannot but be happy. On the contrary, we want everything to happen in our own particular way. We aim at success, victory, gain, honour, praise and so on. If any reverses come, we are disappointed. Gain

or loss, victory or defeat, success or failure, honour or dishonour, praise or censure — all will be the same to us if we take them in the right spirit. This is called equipoise or equilibrium of mind. In the ‘Gita’ it is called *Samatwa* or equality.



When Ramdas was going to the forests in his Sadhana days, the villagers used to frighten him. Wild beasts were roaming about in the forests. Ramdas was sitting there the whole night chanting Ram Nam. Nothing untoward happened. If you have implicit faith in God’s grace and guidance, no power on earth can frighten or harm you. If you meet with obstacles, so much the better. They come as a test of faith.



The way of the true Sadhaka is to throw from time to time the light of enquiry on himself in order to know where he is and whether he stands the test of the highest spiritual experience.



It is an established truth that we cannot please the world and God at the same time, and that the path of Truth is as narrow as the razor’s edge. Ramdas knows from experience that when he gave up all

considerations relating to the world and struggled to walk on the path of Truth, he was assailed on all sides by biting criticism and persistent persecution. But these gratuitous attacks, instead of putting a check on his progress, accelerated his pace towards the goal. The more we are reviled and disowned by the world, when we stand for God and God alone, the nearer we approach Him who is the only real Beloved of our heart. Tests come to us in various ways. Ours is to be unshaken in our adamant purpose, and march onwards with a spirit of heroic adventure.



In all cases of failure and disappointment, keep your mind ever at a high level of exultation, by adopting a spirit of complete surrender to the will of God. By Satsang and meditation, you can bravely withstand the attacks of worries and cares. It is no doubt a trying time. But it will pass away. Such days of stress and overwork shall not last long. God will grant you a life of peace and quietude. But now is the time when you should stand the test, and cling firmly to the feet of the Lord with all faith. Don't give in. Cultivate forbearance, strength and resignation — and you will triumph over the apparently irksome and untoward situations. □

WORDS OF PUJYA MATAJI KRISHNABAI



Loving Papa! Once when I was in the Ashram, I saw a helpless woman wearing a tattered piece of cloth for lack of a sari. She asked me in all humility for a sari. How



could I obtain a sari there? Since I did not need a sari of eighteen cubits which I was then wearing, I went beneath a tree and, tearing it into two pieces, gave one to the woman. When I returned home Sundari questioned me as to why my sari had become short in length. I explained to her the reason and she immediately bought a new one and gave it to me. I wore this sari of eighteen cubits only for a few days. Another woman again begged of me for a sari and in this case as well I divided mine into two parts and gave one piece to the woman. As usual, when I returned home Sundari noticed again that I wore only a cut piece of sari. She then asked me if I needed any more a sari of eighteen cubits. I replied that if I had a sari of that length, I would not be able to resist giving a piece of it to any other needy woman. Thenceforward I have been using only saris eleven cubits long.

O compassionate Papa! With the object of making me your own in all respects, you tested me

in various ways, ending with a crucial test as to how far I had any attachment for garments and gold. Your Lila is wonderful! □



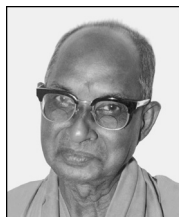
Spirituality and religion do not admit of our leading an erratic and immoral life. We must grow from purity to purity until we are fully illumined with the light, love and peace of God. This is the ultimate realisation, and we must have this alone in view and work up to the attainment of that supreme goal. All else is only talk and of no avail. We may call ourselves as belonging to this religion or that, this group or that, and as disciples of this person or that. But this will not do. What really counts is spiritual advancement based upon our inner purity and real transformation within us. Our outer life must bear out the fact of our highest spiritual experience. Our outer life must wear itself out in the service of God. This is the test by which we can know where we stand — not by what we call ourselves, but by what we really are.

— Swami Ramdas

WORDS OF PUJYA SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA



Adjust To All Conditions Cheerfully:



We can be happy in life only if we are able to adjust to all conditions. We should be happy in any situation God places us. What is important is to keep our mind ever dwelling on Him. When that is done, other things do not matter.

Beloved Papa had placed you in the so-called favourable situation so far, where you had nothing to complain about. Now it is Papa who has put you in a different situation. You should be able to accept it as brought about by His will and remain happy. Really, if you believe that it is Beloved Papa who is arranging everything in everybody's life, you will have no reason to complain at all. "Thy will be done" should be your guiding principle in everything.



Make The Best Of Life:

Some devotees get fed up with life and want to get out of the bondage of the body but do not know how. The question of how long one is to live is not in one's hands. So, instead of getting fed up with life, let

us make the best possible use of it. If we try to look upon the entire world as the manifestation of God and accept that every event happens by His will, we can be full of joy in all conditions and circumstances. As a wise man has said: “We cannot change the entire world but, by changing our attitude towards the world, we can be always happy.”



Be Happy Always:

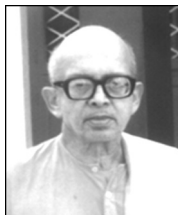
In one's life, so many things happen as one has to deal with people of different types and characters. You may like them or dislike them. Similarly, others, in turn, may like you or dislike you. These are all part of the worldly game. So far as you are concerned, try to love even those who hate you. We are all Beloved Papa's children and, as such, we should try to live up to Beloved Papa's teachings which say that in the universe, we are all brothers and sisters and, therefore, one family. So, wherever you are, you should feel you are in Beloved Papa's mansion and, therefore, happy. The foundation for this is the chanting of the holy Ram Nam. If you keep chanting the Divine Name, all will go well with you and you will feel at home everywhere, and at all times. □

WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

By Swami Shuddhananda



At 2 p.m. in Papa's Room: Mataji referred to Ratnakka, the lady devotee from Udipi, coming to her in the morning and making the plea that she be allowed to recite Hanuman



Chalisa in the room. Ratnakka was a staunch adherent of the Jnana Marg, the path of meditation etc. and, her request took Mataji by surprise. How did this desire to recite Hanuman Chalisa fit in with her philosophy and her own oft-repeated prayer that Papa should make her empty within and without?"

Mataji: "The whole idea of Sadhana is to be completely empty within and without. Only then can Papa reveal Himself in His eternal, infinite Swarup in our heart. Instead of going all out for this state, I wondered what had made Ratnakka now want to recite Hanuman Chalisa? This is how our mind can mislead us when we try to advance on the path. It is actually a test brought by Papa, to see if even unconsciously our ego will mislead us by drawing us to name and form when our real quest is for Papa's Real Swarup. Since morning, this thought was in

my mind, and I was asking myself how Ratnakka could have felt the need to recite Hanuman Chalisa. I too tripped and fell. The only difference is that in my case, as Papa had already made me empty inside and outside, I fell into a pit within Papa's 'Khali Swarup' (state of emptiness). During lunch-time I wanted to know something and I asked the question to those attending on me. None answered. I then started wondering why none present cared to give me the information sought by me and my mind started raising all kinds of questions. Then, Papa told me from within: 'Here you are talking of making everything "Khali" (empty) and shedding all desires in order to drop your body so that Ramdas can take you back. Yet, here you are again making yourself needlessly restless, wondering why no reply was given to your question. Where is your desire to return to Ramdas?'"

Mataji: "Normally, when I look at anyone, I do not see their name and form but Papa's 'Khali Swarup'. I see through them only emptiness, which is Papa's real 'Swarup'. When I did not get any answer to my questions, instead of starting to wonder what the matter was, I should have kept quiet and lost myself in Papa's 'Khali Swarup'. Instead, I started speculating what the matter was. That was like digging a pit in


Papa's Khali Swarup and leaping into it! Of course, by reminding me what I was doing, Papa made me come up immediately. I just want to point out that I am not all together blameless — by finding fault with Ratnakka, I have tripped up and fallen!"

Ratnakka: "All I pray, Mataji, is that Beloved Papa should reveal His eternal and infinite Being in me. Mataji has cured me of my madness to render 'Hanuman Chalisa'."

Mataji: "There is nothing wrong as such in wanting to render Hanuman Chalisa. But, for one who is aspiring for Papa's Nirguna Swarup, this only becomes a bondage. You should pray to Papa within and He will answer your prayer. The thing is, we just don't pray to Him within us. We should talk to Him as a child talks to its mother, talk to Him all the time, He likes being spoken to, you know, and this will keep Him always in your mind and prevent it from hankering for this or that. My own prayer to Papa is that when He takes me away, I should give up my breath only seeing His empty Swarup all around me. Then only will I merge myself right away in His infinite and eternal Being. I tell Papa: 'Papa, when you come to call me, see that I see only your Khali Swarup everywhere.'" □

TESTS GIVEN BY RAM

From The Book 'In Quest Of God'

uring his itinerant life, Beloved Papa was subjected to various tests to enable him to be vigilant in his Sadhana and not take a moment for granted.

These numerous tests were to examine his steadfastness on the path, his commitment to the goal and also see how far was he willing to go to subjugate his “little self” for experiencing his oneness with the “True Self”. Beloved Papa passed all the tests; thus, hastened his march towards the Goal Supreme. Of course, it should not be forgotten that Ram, like an ever-protecting mother, watched over Beloved Papa’s well-being from moment to moment.

Some of the tests given by Ram to Beloved Papa are shared in this issue. This endeavour is to enable us to try to develop vigilance in our Sadhana and take all experiences as His tests for burnishing our personality to attain the expansiveness that is its Real Nature.

With this background, let us go through some of the tests and see how far we can imbibe the lessons in our lives:

1. **Test:** Is it possible to remain patient and positive when insulted or abused?

Answer: If we look upon the insult as a learning experience, we may be able to remain calm.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life: In the train to Tirupapuliyur, two young educated men stared at Beloved Papa and commented: "Mark closely the Sadhu facing us. He belongs, take my word, to a class of Sannyasis who are perfect humbugs. The fellow has adopted this mode of life simply as a means of eking out his livelihood. This man is a veritable impostor and a hoax." This observation was highly approved of by the other party who held a similar opinion.

Beloved Papa looked upon the situation as brought about by Ram, in all kindness. Instead of feeling annoyed, he sent up a prayer to Ram to bless the young men for their frankness. To top it all, Beloved Papa expressed his gratitude to these friends with folded hands.

2. **Test:** Is it possible to crush the ego by going from door to door seeking alms?

Answer: Yes, begging for alms from door to door is a tough test as the ego will put up a fight,

but with conviction in one's vows and the path taken, one can.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life: One morning in Tirupapuliur, a Sadhuras advised Beloved Papa to go for alms to a few houses pointed out by him as money was needed for Beloved Papa's diet of plantains and milk. Beloved Papa, who was always at the bidding of his guide, whom he considered as Ram himself, did as directed.

- 3. Test:** When painstaking efforts are undertaken for a purpose and it is thwarted with unfulfillment, should we get dispirited or dejected?

Answer: We should maintain equipoise in the event that things do not go our way even after putting in great efforts.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life: When Beloved Papa and the Sadhuras walked 20 miles, reached Pondicherry for the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and were told that the saint was in retirement for a year, Beloved Papa surrendered to the will and wish of Ram.

- 4. Test:** When faced with unforeseen inconvenient circumstances, how should we respond?

Answer: We should try to leave all events in the hands of the Lord.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life: When a policeman escorted Beloved Papa and the Sadharam to the police station in Pondicherry, the frightened Sadharam feared a flogging. However, Beloved Papa remained calm and suggested that they might accompany the policeman and leave the future in the hands of Ram.

5. **Test:** Seeing the turn of events not moving as expected, when the accompanying person or persons resort to giving vent to their agitation, should we join in?

Answer: Only through such turn of events we will know whether we react from the individual level or a higher level.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life: At the police station the Police Inspector asked Beloved Papa and the Sadharam to leave Pondicherry within two hours, which was then reduced to one hour. A few yards off the station, the Sadharam commenced to pour quite a shower of abuse on the Inspector. No amount of persuasion on the part of Beloved Papa for peace would stop the brisk play of his tongue. For about a mile the Sadharam's wrath did not cool down. Gradually,

he became silent, may be, due to exhaustion of his stock of vocabulary or on account of an empty stomach, or it might have been all a test of Ram to see whether Beloved Papa would join in the game set afoot by Him!

- 6. Test:** Are we in a position to receive the teachings and messages of saints without allowing the mind to judge?

Answer: An intensely committed aspirant alone can identify and receive inspiration from a spiritually evolved soul with total disregard for the latter's physical appearance, age, etc. The connection forged will be spontaneous and not guided by the mind.

Incident From Beloved Papa's Life:

Although Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi was just 6 years older to Beloved Papa, the latter sought Bhagawan's blessings for his Sadhana without allowing the mind to sit in judgement.

- 7. Test:** When given opportunities for spending time in solitude, do we accept it as God's will and dedicate the time for God-remembrance?

Answer: We should see the finger of God in all events and use every possible opportunity as provided by Him for undisturbed, deep meditation.

Incident from Beloved Papa's life: At the prompting of Ram, Beloved Papa expressed his desire to remain in solitude for some time. The Sadhuram immediately took Beloved Papa up the mountain and showed him many caves. Of these, a small cave was selected. In this cave he lived for nearly a month in deep meditation of Ram. This was the first time that Beloved Papa was taken by Ram into solitude for His Bhajan.

- 8. Test:** When bathed in the bliss of Ram, should one be mindful about how the world views us?

Answer: When we behold the Lord in all, as all, no other concerns come to mind.

Incident from Beloved Papa's life: Receiving a glimpse of universal vision made Beloved Papa feel driven to hug a man, trees and plants as forms of Ram. Here, Ram wanted to see whether Beloved Papa would be concerned about being misunderstood and taken for a madman.

- 9. Test:** Should Sadhakas boast about their intense Sadhanas?

Answer: Sadhanas are done by His will, power and grace. It is folly to boast that we have accomplished anything.

Lesson: Beloved Papa spent a month in his mountain retreat in Tiruvannamalai. Because of being well-grounded in his ideals, he never boasted about any of his Sadhanas.

10. Test: When subjected to extreme weather conditions and difficult situations are we in a position to hold on to the ideal?

Answer: When the commitment to the ideal is total, adversities do not become roadblocks.

Incident from Beloved Papa's life: At Tirupati, Ram sorely tested the Sadhuras and Beloved Papa by exposing them to extreme weather conditions and difficult situations to see whether they would continue with God-thought, forgetting the body-idea.


11. Test: What should be an aspirant's perspective when seeing the wonders of nature?

Answer: See the Divine in His grandeur and magnificence.

Incident from Beloved Papa's Life: Ram showed Beloved Papa the picturesque landscapes near Papanashini Ganga, to enable him to see Him in animate and inanimate things. □

RAMCHARANDAS TESTED

Excerpt From 'In The Vision Of God'

hey (Beloved Papa and Ramcharandas) passed through the fertile and enchanting Kangra valley and reached at dusk a small town on an elevated plateau. Ramdas proposed that they might occupy a dilapidated rest-house for the night. But the boy (Ramcharandas) was in no mood for rest, he was feeling hungry and the thought of food was revolving in his mind.

“Swamiji,” he said, “I shall try to get some food by Bhiksha. You may wait here beneath the tree.”

The tree was in front of the rest-house. Ramcharandas passed into the darkness, but returned in a short time barehanded and with a wry face.

“What is the matter, Ram?” Ramdas questioned.

“I approached two houses,” he replied ruefully; “I got instead of Bhiksha, reproaches and scolding of a very virulent type, and at one place, a young man of the house mistaking me for a prowling thief pursued me with a stout stick in his hand. I raced for very life and am here.”

His graphic narration made Ramdas burst into laughter. “Consider, Ram, the scoldings and the offer of blows from the stout stick are also Bhiksha. You

received the former, but why did you refuse to accept the latter, the more precious of the two?" Ramdas remarked humorously.

"Your wit is out of place, Swamiji," he said, not relishing the way in which Ramdas expressed things. "I am hungry and I must have something to eat. I shall not be baulked. I am off again."

And he disappeared once more. In half-an-hour he was back. This time his face indicated fright coupled with a sense of relief at escape from an unpleasant scrape. Ramcharandas was a simple boy, sincere and outspoken.

"Swamiji," he recounted, "two narrow shaves. Soon after I left you, some knocking about brought me to a crowded house and in the front room over a fire I saw Roties being prepared. I rushed into the room where a pile of Roties was beside the fire. The room was full of men. I stretched out my hands and requested the man at the fire to give me a few Roties. The man said that they were Pathans and that if I had no objection, they could spare a couple of Roties for me and also a bit of curry.

"Now a look round presented to my sight a number of rough, burly, ferocious Pathans with shaggy and ominous beards. I lost no time; one leap from the room and I was on the road. I heard a faint rumble of

laughter from the direction of the house, but I did not remain there to listen to all that. I took to my heels. I ran wildly without knowing where I was going. Now a row of huts stood before me. Here is food for me, I thought and approached one of the huts. The host welcomed me, and, coming to know the reason of my nocturnal visit, said: "Well, I have no objection to give you food. We have it ready, but I may first warn you that we are Chamars or cobblers by caste!" "What!" I exclaimed and the next instant I shot out of the hut like a bullet from a gun and I am here! Hunger is welcome, but tasting food from the hands of Muslims and Chamars — well, I draw the line there."

"Ah! Ram," Ramdas exclaimed, "you have failed the test. The distinction you are making is unnatural. You are out for universal vision and yet you adhere to these ignorance — born of prejudices! The Muslim and the Chamar ought to be Beloved Ram for you. Is He not dwelling in all?"


"You are right," he agreed, "but to rise above the distinction of caste is very hard. Look at the way I was fooled by it."

"One more attempt," he said and left. In a few minutes he returned with a bland smile.

"Swamiji, come on. We have an invitation for supper in a Hindu household." □

TRANSCENDING PERSONAL WORSHIP

By Swami Ramdas

rishnabai's spiritual life was marked by steady growth. Her adoration for Ramdas, whom she looks upon as God, was first intensely personal. She was greatly attached to his physical form. She was looking upon his body as so holy that she was worshipping it daily. With Tulsi garlands she was garlanding Ramdas half a dozen times a day and prostrating any number of times. She was then also in the habit of washing his feet and drinking the Pada-Tirtham.

Ramdas used to tell Krishnabai often that she should not be attached to any personal form, even if it be of the Guru, and that she must rise beyond all names and forms to the plane of the impersonal and realize the all-pervading, nameless and formless, Universal Being who is seated in all hearts. Then she would answer, "I do not want to hear anything about your Nirguna aspect", and she would sing her favourite verse of saint Tukaram on the glory of the Personal God, beginning with, "I do not want realisation of Atman. Let me be your devotee and you, my God."

Afterwards Ramdas thought that the time had come for her to transcend this personal aspect. So, he sternly directed her that this kind of personal worship must stop and that she must look upon the Guru as the universal, impersonal Spirit that dwells in the hearts of all.

Ramdas advised her thus, “It is not good clinging to one form. While it proves to be of help at first, it becomes an obstacle later on. Seeing Ramdas everywhere does not mean that in everybody you should see his physical body. You should find out what Ramdas really stands for. He stands for the all-pervading Atman. If he were merely this body, surely you will not be attached to him so much. You know unconsciously that he is not this physical body but the pure Spirit which has assumed all these forms. The Spirit everywhere is the same, but the external forms differ. Only when you transcend the body idea you will realize that you are one with the Spirit. It is the same Spirit which is within you and within him. It has become your form, his form and all other forms. Gold is converted into various kinds of ornaments. All ornaments are of the same gold, but it is given different forms. So also, the

Nirguna Brahman has assumed this form, that form and all other forms.” This was not easy for her to follow. She wept and cried whenever Ramdas gave her such advice. In order to free her from attachment to the external worship, Ramdas imposed on her strict restrictions that she should not speak, should not see and should not do any service to Ramdas. Ramdas also asked her to stay in (Beloved Papa’s Poorvashram daughter) Rame’s house and not come to the Ashram.

Thus, she gave up this external worship — no garlanding, no prostrating, no worshipping, no drinking of Pada-Tirtham. She was in agony for a time that her heart’s desire to worship Ramdas with garlands etc., could not be continued any more. Now when the support of the personal worship was also cut off, where could the mind go? It went inward — it had no other place to go. By God’s grace she gradually rose beyond the personal and her vision began to expand. She began to look upon all forms in the universe as the various forms of God — of her Beloved Papa. □

Source: Krishnabai



‘UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN’

By Swami Ramdas

In India devotees or mystics feel that God does everything for the best. They have the conviction that everything happens by the will of God who is all love and mercy. Even the worldly losses that come to them, they consider as God-ordained and they submit. They are fully confident that by passing through sufferings patiently, they will ultimately get transformed into the Divine.

Just as manure is necessary for the growth of the plant, they consider that trials and tribulations are necessary for the growth of the soul. In this way they conquer all suffering. Joy and sorrow are all mental states. When you are in a particular state of mind you take certain happenings as for your good and you are happy. When you are in another state of mind, you take the same events as harmful to you and so you are unhappy. Evil and good are only mental states and nothing outside you exists as good and bad. It has been rightly said : “There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so”. There is no standard of good and evil universally applicable. All our standards are mind-made. If you take everything that happens as coming from God, you will remain serene and calm.

Mahatma Gandhi was put in jail. There were also many thieves in the jail. But the difference was that while the one was laughing, the others were crying. When the mind is free you keep yourself happy, but if the mind is bound you remain unhappy wherever you are. If you take it that God's will prevails in the world and by His will everything happens, you do not see any evil anywhere and there is no suffering for you at any time. This is Ramdas' experience. When God took him away from the old sphere of life and made him wander on the face of the earth as a mendicant with only one cloth, he was calm, cheerful and happy. He had passed at that time through severe trials — hunger and many kinds of trouble — but he took every situation that came to him as willed by his beloved Master.

God never means ill. He is always loving and merciful. This is the attitude which Ramdas had towards all the trials which he passed through. Then he found that it is not the external conditions that make us happy or unhappy but our own attitude towards such conditions. There are so many millionaires who have big houses, many servants and all the things necessary for material enjoyments, but all the same their lives are miserable. They go to Fakirs like Ramdas — wandering mendicants ever immersed in bliss and always smiling — and ask them where they get their happiness from.

They say, with all the comforts they enjoy they do not find happiness and want to know how they can get it. Really, if you have found happiness within you, you are the King of kings; but if you have not found it you may be the emperor of the world but still you may be the most miserable man. Where is this happiness? It is within you. A poor man in a hut who remembers God is far happier than the man sitting on the throne who forgets Him. You think happiness eludes you like the will-o-the-wisp. If you have discovered the fountain of happiness within yourself, what do you care for name, fame and wealth? If they come, it is all right. If they do not come, still it is all right. Whatever depends upon external things is perishable, because the external things themselves are perishable. Perishable things cannot give you lasting peace and happiness. The imperishable alone can give you true and lasting peace and that imperishable is within you.

In every part of the world you will see the same eagerness to possess wealth, name and fame. All these things can never grant you happiness. Therefore, it is said, contentment is a Divine virtue and a continual feast. If you have contentment you can always be happy, whether you sit on the throne or sleep on the foot-path. External conditions do not affect you at all. This is the supreme state which sages advise you to attain. ◻

DEAR CHILDREN

God Is Everywhere — A Test

Gonce a saint, to test his disciples to find out if they were conscious of God's presence everywhere, called a few of them, gave them a mango each and asked them to eat it in a place where nobody could see them. They all went with their mangoes and, except one, returned and reported that none saw them eating the mango. But the disciple who was an exception came back with the mango and told the Guru that he could not find a place where he was not watched by God, who is an eternal and all-pervading witness. □




EPISTLES OF SWAMI RAMDAS

Beloved Ram,
...Whatever the statements that saints have made, at different stages in the course of their spiritual development, Ramdas claims from the highest spiritual experience, that true Bhakti can securely raise its structure only on the basis of Advaita realisation. You cannot be a devotee in the highest sense of the term, unless you have realised

your perfect oneness with God in all His aspects. A drop can realise the ocean provided it permits itself to be merged in it. Truly in essence the ocean and the wave are one. This knowledge alone can make the wave play cheerfully on the bosom of the ocean. The individual “I” — an existence presumed to be separate from the Universal Life and Spirit — must go entirely. Thereafter, the personality that is attained by the individual is not local and finite but universal and infinite. The duality of God and His devotee is assumed, by the one indefinable Truth, for the sake of Lila. Let us not forget therefore, that Advaita is the real basis for true Dvaita. Both are equally great in significance. Saints do the teaching, but our own experience is the test of that teaching. Hanging on to “spiritual pegs” is not realisation. Perception and experience alone can grant us the full comprehension and realisation of Truth. The proper thing to do is to go within and explore the uttermost depths of your Being and know what and who you are in reality. Swimming on the surface holding on to external props, without aspiring to dive deep down into the bottom can give us only a hazy and imperfect vision of Truth, which is the Source of all life and manifestation. This Source is for ever and always the Supreme One... □



IN MEMORIAM

 Sri Lalchand Pardhanani (aged 82), an ardent devotee of the Ashram since the 1950s, was called by Beloved Papa on the 3rd of July 2021. He was in and out of hospitals ever since his battle with COVID-19 in April. He succumbed to a heart failure.

We pray for the departed soul to rest in peace at HIS holy feet. □



ANANDASHRAM NEWS

15,500-CRORE NAMA JAPA YAGNA FOR WORLD PEACE: The total Japa received in the third round of the 15500-Crore Nama Japa Yagna for World Peace in the month of June is 220 crores. The grand total of the Japa done so far in this round now stands at 10646 crores. □

58TH MAHASAMADHI DAY OF BELOVED PAPA SWAMI RAMDAS

***B**eloved Papa's 58th Mahasamadhi Day will be observed on the 13th of this month. On this sacred occasion, THE VISION offers its humble homage to Beloved Papa with a prayer for the speedy spiritual progress of all, culminating in eternal happiness.*

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

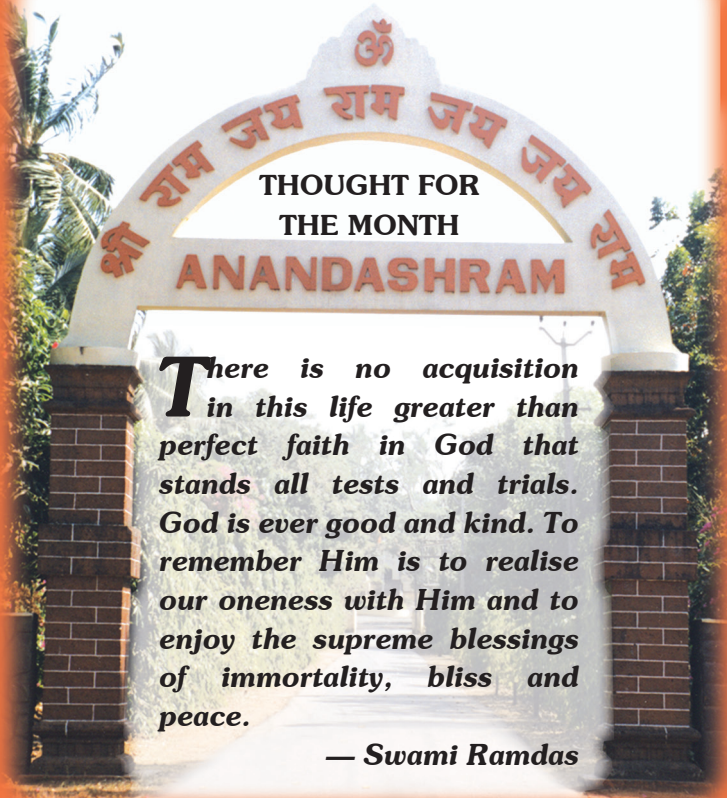
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2	At the Feet of God	85
3	Call of the Devotee	130
4	Dive Deep and Soar High	120
5	Gita Sandesh	110
6	Glimpses of Divine Vision	60
7	God Experience, Vols. 1 & 2 (Set)	240
8	Gospel Of Swami Ramdas, Vols. 1 to 3 (Set)	750
9	Guru's Grace	150
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