



**SPIRITUAL PATH**  
**Life and conduct of a seeker**  
Extract from 5/2/08 Satsang

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*Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha*

The life of a seeker of Truth has to be completely different from the pattern of life which ordinary people generally lead. Most people in the world are just concerned about improving their material circumstances. They aim to make their environment and their circumstances better. However, the efforts of a seeker should not be as much for the improvement of his external life and circumstances, as they should be for the improvement of his inner quality of life. That is the basic difference between the life of a seeker and that of an ordinary worldly person who is not following the spiritual path.

Most people in the world are busy enjoying the pleasures of the senses. If you analyse the activities of people, you will find that most of the time people just seek to satisfy sensual desires and pleasures. However, the effort of a seeker is to control and discipline the senses which are attracted towards objects of the external world, and then step by step to have greater and greater discipline in life.

In the seeker's journey there are certain important factors which cannot be ignored and to which attention has to be paid. One such important aspect is the question of relationships with one's family, one's partner, one's workmates, and with the world around. This is a very important question and it has in it a very important aspect of our existence. I mean the emotional growth of seekers. Today it has come to my mind to suggest to you certain points which may be of great help to you in achieving harmony in your relationships.

As you all know, external harmony and inner harmony are interrelated. We will not have inner harmony if we do not have good relationships in the external world. If your inner calmness is disturbed in your relationships with your family, your husband or wife, children or parents or partner, you will also not have inner harmony. A person who has greater harmony and calmness inside is able to project this same harmony, peace and calmness into the external world also. The internal and the external aspects are both interrelated.

There is one important point which every seeker has to learn. It should be very clear in the mind of the seeker that the only purpose of his or her existence in the world is to serve the world. No one can evolve spiritually without serving the world. Evolution is just not possible. A seeker should realise very clearly in his mind that he or she was born only for serving others. The crucial point is that his or her existence is designed for the service of others, without any expectation of receiving service from others.

It should be very clear in the mind of the seeker that we have to serve others without expecting others to serve us. It is not only service. In other respects, a seeker should never expect anything from anybody. One should try to give and give and give and never think about taking anything from anybody. This has to be the approach of those people who want happiness in life.

In my earlier discourses I have often said that the only way to be happy in life is to try to make others happy. Happiness comes automatically to those who try to make others happy. And the rule is that happiness evaporates for those who try to make them-selves happy. This is because happiness does not come from somewhere outside. Happiness exists in us and all we have to do is to discover it. It has to be sought out and discovered. And this discovery becomes possible as soon as we become ready to serve others and to make others happy. So this is a very important rule for seekers to observe.

Most people in the world want other people to exist for their own comfort, convenience and enjoyment. They wish to be respected by others and do not want others to expect respect from them. This is the attitude of those who have decided to be unhappy. It is a very important point. It means that the crux of a seeker's life has to be doing duty rather than expecting favours.

One has to keep considering what is one's duty and forgetting what is one's right. The spiritual path requires a progressive growth of the element of duty in life without any consideration for one's rights. As you know, rights and duties go together – but I am talking to those who have decided to lead a spiritual life. In the spiritual field one has to pay more attention to duty rather than to the factor of rights. And along with these elements of life, it is necessary to have another factor – the great virtue of tolerance.

Tolerance and patience have to be developed and instilled in the seeker. One must tolerate others. One should not only listen to different views, but listen with respect and attention. Be tolerant towards others, and then have patience. In one of the Sanskrit scriptures (*Vishnusahasranaam*) one thousand names of Vishnu are given. One epithet given for the Lord is *Amani Maando*. This means that God remains without respect, without even expecting respect, but He gives respect to others. So our attitude should be to respect others but not to expect respect from them.

If someone calls us a stupid cow, let us learn to smile. At least 'cow' was the word used and not 'donkey'. It is better to be called a cow than a donkey! If someone called one a rat, at least one was called a living rat and not a dead rat. Our attitude should be to try to find virtues in others and faults in ourselves.

We have to eradicate our weaknesses and we are not responsible for the weaknesses of others or of the world. The beauty is that the more we become free of our own weaknesses, the more we will be able to see virtues in others. There is nobody in the world who does not possess a special virtue which we do not have. Everyone has got something special. In essence it is a question of attitude. It is essential for us to criticise ourselves but to appreciate others. Everybody would like to be appreciated but that habit has to be given up when you are on the spiritual path.

There is one more quality. We should have inner calmness combined with firmness. Calmness but also firmness! We should be firm in our principles and ideas. We should be open to accept knowledge from the world. If we find it worthwhile, we should respectfully receive it. If we are convinced we should accept it, but if we are not convinced then we should not accept it. In our attitude there should be calmness. But calmness does not mean weakness. Calmness is never a weakness. A really strong person is always calm and peaceful. This was another point which came to my mind.

With these elements will come the attitude of 'forget and 'forgive'. It is the attitude of forgetting and forgiving those whom we do not agree with, or who sometimes happen to do us some injustice. When so many people live and work together, some rude or unfair behaviour on the part of somebody is quite natural. In such a case we should forgive, ignore and forget

it, without ever cherishing an element of hurt or complaint in our own heart. In this way, step by step, the inner secrets of your personality will start coming to light. The hidden divinity in every one of us will start coming to the surface in our conduct. In this way one's relationship in one's family, with one's workmates and with others will be very smooth and there will be harmony.

One of the most difficult problems in life are relationships between husbands and wives. In this sphere also those who want to be happy and undisturbed have to learn to think more about the other partner than expecting the other partner to care for them. In this relationship also one has to learn to serve. It is through service that real spiritual development happens.

For those who develop this attitude, this very world around us, which is full of conflict and contradictions, starts to appear a very nice place in which to live, and a very beautiful garden in which to walk. But when we do not have this attitude, then the world appears to us as a place which is not worth living in. So it is in our hands whether we enrich our life or whether we destroy it.

The faculty of discrimination is a special blessing that is available only to human beings. It is not available to any other beings. It is the faculty of judging between right and wrong and then making efforts to go all-out for the right and avoid the wrong. This faculty of discrimination is a special feature. It is just like a ray of the sun. This faculty of discrimination comes directly from God. If one goes on following this faculty of discrimination - this ray of discrimination - one will definitely reach God one day.

These were certain points in my mind today which I wanted to share with you. If you try to value them, observe them and practice them in your life, the quality of your life will definitely improve. It depends upon you. You are free in every respect. A freedom is given to us by God and this freedom is to be used and not misused, because freedom can be used, or it can be misused. And this is where the faculty of discrimination helps us know how to use this freedom in every situation and not misuse it.

For example you have money more than your requirements. You can use it by helping others or you can misuse it by simply drinking in the pub and just going for merry making somewhere – nobody can stop you. So this freedom is there.

We are the fortunate our souls who have been given the bodies of human beings by the Lord and the only purpose is that we return to our real father, God. And I do not mean return to Him somewhere in the heaven but on Earth it-self, because He exists everywhere. We do not have to search for Him somewhere in the heaven. He is everywhere, here itself. I wish we all progress on this path.

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