

# Vedanta Family Foundation

## *Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham!*

A Short Story

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### A Father's Concerns

Appaji bent over to clearly hear Aliyaji express his understanding and support to cater to the needs and the activities of Srimo. Lord Ganesha looked on benignly even as the evening breeze blew soothingly over the steps of hallowed temple, the twilight was setting in, and the last rays of the embers like sun escaped the clouds over the horizon to cast long shadows in that village famous for green beans. Sugita made the personal commitment to help followup on these good intentions of Aliyaji. Sugita and Aliyaji made for a well-knit, harmonious couple – upright and pious in their everyday life! Appaji was aging and wanted to ensure that his wealth was shared equally

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between his only daughter Sugita and only son Srimo. Both his children were married and settled... or so thought Appaji for Srimo was going through interesting times – definitely not for the faint hearted. Appaji had kept up his resolve in sharing his wealth – just that while Sugita got her due share over time, Srimo's situation was very different. It was in the red-hot burning embers of life experiences that the Truths of Vedanta are re-discovered and lived. Appaji's charter for Sugita and Aliyaji was very clear: Do whatever it takes, using his wealth and resources, to aid Srimo's efforts in the everyday living of their understanding and wisdom of Vedanta. And in sharing it with others for relief from entangling worldly afflictions as well as their inner blissful well-being. Uncommon words for commoners – well, deep thought and efforts will have to be put in to understand it right.

Seventy years plus Appaji's everyday routine was an emblem of independent old age living - praying to God several times in the day, cleaning his home, making his food, washing his clothes, shopping, or visiting temples and

ashrams. Appaji clearly had a spiritual inclination from his young days. And he sought to build it up in his family as well. Just that for those truly seeking spiritual progress, God's blessings come in a variety of ways: while the circumstances can turn out to be challenging and disruptive, they provide great fuel for one's inner journey of sadhana and transformations. The trials and tribulations toughen up and transform the inner being even

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as the protective hand of Mother *Mahamaya* is always there, to intervene in unseen ways to thwart the unfolding catastrophe from its full impact – the divine grace! These are also the times when the wisdom of Vedantic sages become all the more meaningful, even as it is applied and lived in the everyday activities. Appaji had his own concerns – how many really understood the import of these words? How much more blessed would one be to understand these words in their full glory.....

### Marriage – the Spiritual Adventure?

Srimo's strange circumstances started when he decided to get married and settle, having been very successful in leading a contemporarily upright life blended with the best of Vedantic values. He earned enough to lead a decent family living without any wants. He was open and proactive in his efforts to understand, assess and put into practice such *sadhanas* that would bring about true inner transformations. Way above the rest. Over time, he interacted with several sages and sincere spiritual practitioners, volunteering in their public service efforts. When he decided to enter *grishasta ashrama* – get married - his goal was to raise a family imbibing the best of

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Vedanta values. Ofcourse, getting a spouse in tune with these aims and values was a big challenge. So was the bigger challenge to get people around to understand all this in the right spirit. But then, life is like that – is it not? Nothing ever happens in the way we sincerely desire. We accept the best of the options destiny presents us. And choose what in our little understanding is right for us. Ofcourse it is reality that was unfolding all the way, whatever be our thinking in assuming that we have the smartness to influence and outwit it.

Initially Sugita and Aliyaji were a bit confused! The 'inner transformations' sounded all the more vague. “We just follow our 'traditions' and do what 'elders' say!” - that was the commonly accepted norm. To Srīmo, well, such attitudes were the trap! Vedanta sadhana was all about accepting reality as is, understanding it and thinking thoroughly, putting in devotional prayers and efforts to transform one's inner *vasanas*, and to live in tune with that reality every moment in a vedantic way thus enjoying and celebrating life! It was never too late to wake up to this *jnana* and to embark on this spiritual journey.

## Vedanta Sadhana

With all the solemnity, both Sugita and Aliyaji requested Appaji to share with them that big picture view of vedanta and the sadhana – something that they had heard from him earlier. In a nutshell, Appaji told them of how our *Ishtadevas* and *Ishtadevis* were but the *sakara* manifestation of that Infinite *Brahman* which the Upanishadic seers indicated in so many simple and direct words! Appaji said, “Not comprehensible and yet it is there in everyone of us, for us to BE, captured by the profound phrase: '*sat-chit-ananda*'! Acharya Shankara extracted the essence of the *Brahma sutras* and the *Upanishads* to wisen us up to the Vedantic wisdom that '*Brahman is Truth. The world that we have built around us is false. The Jiva is nothing but Brahman!*' - something that is absolutely relevant every moment of our experiential existence! Sri Ramakrishna practised many *sadhana margas* to their culmination, and experientially reached this conclusion. *Mahamaya* or this manifestation of

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universe, gross or subtle, is that *Brahman*! Sri Ramana Maharshi was a living validation of what is found in Vedanta!”

Aliyaji remarked, “I have always found it difficult to co-relate these profound thoughts with the everyday realities that I deal with – in interacting with others, more so when negative emotions come into play.” Aliyaji looked into Appaji, with direct earnestness.

Appaji took the cue and highlighted the shallowness of our 'normal' everyday living. “From the little petty worlds that each one of us live in, with all the dirty emotions very nicely kept under wraps but manifesting almost every other dynamic moment of our lives, we seek to fulfill our deep subtle drives and desires. And perhaps, if carrying negative emotional loads of hate and anger, we seek to harm our objects of hate. It is this trail of entangling interactions that build up *karmic* bondage - bondage that we seek relief from - worldly miseries galore! When the realities of life catches up, *karma* blossoms up in positive and negative ways. Praying to Lord Ganesha, we seek His intervention to remove all the obstacles cropping up in our path to fulfill our desires! Seeking protection from the perpetrators of injustice we seek the blessings of Sri Rudra and Maa Durga. These sincere, heartfelt expressions of devotion to the Lord forms the basis of the initial sadhana – living the values of *yama* and *niyama* makes these devotional efforts all the more easier. The *anubhava* is blissful, giving a taste of things to come in the spiritual journey.”

Appaji drew in a deep breath and became silent. Sugita and Aliyaji sat still, their minds soaking up these words of wisdom. They keenly sought to know the next steps of these sadhana efforts and the spiritual journey.

After several minutes of stillness, Appaji continued. “The next steps results in our gravitating naturally to *satsanghas* – for the company of devotees of the Lord as well as sadhakas of Vedanta! It is here that we meet several *sadhakas* and *bhaktas* – very inconspicuous and in the shadows but truly advancing in their inner quest! In the process of exchanging notes about the *sadhanas*, approaches and understandings, we see the indispensable role played by a true Guru – an

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accomplished *mahatman* - who gives us the feedback and guidance to negotiate the unseen and 'unconscious' terrains in this inner journey. But for these blessings, we are lost. In nurturing the stillness and nimbleness of the body through *asanas* and *pranayama*, the sadhaka makes the mind and the *vasanas* more calm and quiet. In fact, over a period of, perhaps, several years, we nurture the *saakshatkara bhava* – advanced *bhakti* - a worshipful stillness of the mind and intellect within, witnessing the play of *vasanas*. Ofcourse, even as we are witnessing, we do act consciously, with *viveka*, to do that which is right, to understand and pre-empt that which is wrong! Yes, the mind does 'unconsciously' con the sadhaka into thinking, saying and doings things not in tune with reality or vedanta sadhana, and yet for every slip, progressing on the razor's edge, he or she will have to pull up and move forward – that is the very basis of 'being' and living a conscious *sadhaka* life! The advanced *sadhana* is all about nurturing the *saakshatkara bhava*, taming the emotional self, living consciously every moment – to

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enjoy and celebrate life! This *dharana* has to be reinforced, repeatedly. Over a period of time the *dhyana* becomes spontaneous culminating in the pinnacle of the experiential state of *Samadhi*. We owe a great debt to Yogi Patanjali for this. The struggle is tremendous and so is the satisfaction for every bit of progress! Absolute integrity, working to sustainedly align the thoughts, words and deeds as well as nurturing aloneness and *satsangha* is the way. The sadhaka lives through a protected life during this period, avoiding entangling interactions with the rest of the world. It is like what Sri Ramakrishna says – a growing tree sapling protected by a temporary fence until it grows strong.”

While Sugita and Aliyaji were absorbing these, Appaji became silent once more! The evening

turned dark. The occasional puja bell chimes were the only sounds to interrupt the pregnant silence! Ofcourse, perhaps, Lord Ganesha was hearing as well. After about an hour of enjoyed silence, noticing that Sugita and Aliyaji were still around, eager and intent on listening, Appaji continued. “What does the sadhaka do, in his or her every day life? An ashram or math gives a protected environment to the sadhu! A householder has lot more challenges, living the *sadhana* norms, walking on the razor's edge! It is so easy for the householder to slip up but those that do succeed, progress a lot more! Beyond a point, a protective environment becomes an obstacle for the sadhaka, depriving him or her of experiences that make one progress!” Sugita became more curious! She asked Appaji, “A householder sadhaka and his or her family? Isn't the family considered an entangling negative influence that very few if any sadhakas succeed in surmounting?”. The thrust of the conversation towards Srmo and his unique circumstances was inescapable!

### **Marital Tremors and Sadhana**

Another bout of silence! And then Appaji continued, “The family can be a tremendous source of *sadhana vairagya* even as one continues to discharge one's duties lovingly!”. The implication was clear: Srmo's situation was a blessing in disguise! He said, “The *vaasana* play - the patterns of behaviour – of the inner thought trains of the mind and the inter-personal behaviour... it is all about being a witness to your own emotional personality living the conscious values both within yourself as well as when interacting with others. Vedanta gives the big picture of how the *Mahamaya* envelopes reality and projects the illusions – the *aavarana shakti* and the *viksepa shakti* – that *maya* resulting from the dynamics of the constituents of the human brain. The emotions, the unconscious, the primitive brain in us - the *manas* – the *manomaya kosha* - is active in about 90% of all our thoughts, words and deeds while the thinking brain is concurrently active having about 5% - in our conscious thinking and expressions – the *vigyanamaya kosha*. Vedanta sadhana is all about making our unconscious *manas* work fully aligned and transformed with our spiritually thinking *buddhi*!” A profound statement! Understanding the full implications

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of this was the key to a successful sadhana!

Appaji continued, "Most householder sadhakas have a tough time understanding this. For many, life is 'smooth'. Everyone is so very 'loving'. The grip of *Mahamaya* is so strong. And why not? But then for a few it could be different and a blessing in disguise - the spouse and the supporting spousal family make normal life all the more unpalatable and miserable! It could happen to any *sadhaka* - a man or a woman!"

The gloves were off Srimo's circumstances! Appaji continued, "Destiny brings such folks together into a matrimonial bond - with their patterns of behaviour totally at variance. Perhaps some kind of accelerated learning time. And it is in this wretchedness, a blessed sadhaka prospers all the more! They marry, without understanding each other or their families -- aspirations and lifestyles - which are perhaps fully incompatible. Like the naive assumption that a bride will be a lifelong *savitri* or the quiet goody goody groom would always dovetail the shrewd wife. The situation becomes all the more distressing if the bride has subtle personality problems, obvious pampered and nurtured by doting parents, perhaps themselves no different. If the marital dreams hit the rocks, she and her folks might employ arrogantly shrewd aggressiveness to bring the man in line. A wise man may not react but respond and sidestep the provocations, perhaps years on, until the provocateurs wears out. The worldly exhibit tame surrender to the sensual - the man wooing, courting and finally seducing her on her own terms. For raising a pious family, our vedanta suggests a different approach - the wise man stays put, going about life and sadhana while the woman's noble folks hunt for a suitable match. When both parties agree after fully understanding and making the commitment to live the traditions, a *vedic kanya-dhaan* happens. Given the way our world is, our folks parade hypocritic pieties while being totally instinctive and worldly seeking to ape other cultures. When the going becomes tough - expectations of self-reliance and self-control as well as discharging the parental responsibilities of vedantic families are brought out in a decent ways after several defaults, or more commonly, if the sadhaka is not pliant, such people immediately rubbish the sadhaka's lifestyle as stoneage hangovers

and not being modern enough - deflecting the core issues of one's failures. Sometimes, these dodging deflections can be aggressive. If the man grows strong in wisdom, he can resist the onslaught. The woman senses getting trapped and gets stressed up - the societal facades she and her family subscribes to prevent her from breaking out to live her desires, drives, instincts and attitudes -- like perhaps she did in her parental home. On the other hand, she lacks the calm sensibilities to fully understand what her spouse has to say - all of which is contemptuously rubbish. Add kids to the confusing marital cauldron for fireworks. Imagine the plight of the man. With the Lord's grace, these are the kinds of situations that are great opportunities for spiritual progress - if the wise man turns into a vedanta sadhaka!"

Aliyaji asked, "Could you kindly tell us more about this wretchedness as well as the way to live unattached in such mess! How do we look out for such behavioural patterns?". He was mentally recalling so many friends with marital problems of various degrees and various kinds. Appaji heard it. A few minutes of silence followed. Darkness had flooded the temple but the soothing light of a waxing half moon lit up the courtyard. The *purohita*s had locked up the main doors and were leaving for the day. Appaji continued, "It is not very difficult to recognize these behavioural patterns! There are these shrill accusations and excuses as well as strong show-offs that fully bury the underlying tell-tale problematic behavioural

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patterns. The crux is this - Name and form or shrill words and emotional showoffs versus the actual reality of the behaviours, events and interactions. Question quietly, detachedly and logically for all the warts to showup. Those that exhibit these *vasanas* usually have blindspots for the same - they cannot recognize it even as it unfolds though they might be aware since others have been telling them. A group like the family members sharing these blindspots can be catastrophic, both to themselves and to the rest - those that are performance oriented or disagreeing. Each one reinforces the other through a deluded sense of righteousness and pride, leading to group aggressiveness as well as group coverups!"

## Personality Disorders & Sadhana Pitfalls

Sugita asked, "Appaji, could you give us some rules of thumb to identify these, both in ourselves as well as in those around us!". Appaji said, "Yes. A deeply honest conscience - nurtured over a long time - is very important to be a witness to and know these in ourselves and in others. Seeing it in the afflicted is simple - more so when you are at the receiving end and choose not to react to provocations but to calmly respond. With *shraddha* and *bhakti* towards our *ishta*, the effective traits that will help us in building up our calm responses in a true and positive loving way to handle these people are: *vairagya* - detachment, *titiksha* - forbearance, *thyaga* - sacrifice, *dhaya* - compassion, *kshama* - forgiveness and *swatantrata* - independence! Calmly responding and not reacting nastily is the way since we are not interested in threatening the provocative ego! Many times provocative behaviours happen in such marriages due to inferiority complexes as well as insecurities. Which is why a marital bonding could look like a curse and yet launch a hundred spiritual aspirants into the high trajectory of *adhyatmic* progress! The ways of the sadhaka in going about normal life could be mysterious to most - caring yet detached. If their interests and desires are not fulfilled or appear to be threatened, the worldly react intensely, exhibiting long term prejudices and negative emotions. It is typically the case of many against a sadhaka or his / her family. There are two critical *sadhana* goals here: check out and overcome such *vasanas* in oneself - emotional reactions occurring within even as you consciously express considered *vivekam* responses to the vicious emotional outrages from worldly spousal folks! The other goal is that the sadhaka will hiss fiercely, but will not bite to ward off the detractors; formulating a response! And his or her life is like the *ahomiya bamboo nartana* - dancing to the song beat but never letting the feet get caught between the clanging bamboo sticks."

Appaji broke into a silence for several minutes. After deep thought he continued, "Our heritage has repeatedly emphasized the need to know how a *maryada purushottham* behaves ideally to know what is right. He or she should be spiritually strong, emotionally mature, physically healthy and mentally alert - throughout life. Everyday popular culture comprises of conscious efforts being put in by all in nurturing and living the wisdom of our heritage, *sanatana dharma*, to become better and better. Practices and traditions that weaken one into mental misfits should be

avoided like plague! Such sadhakas are independent in their choices and decisions, self-sufficient and contributing to the family, the society and the world at large. In short, every moment is calmly enjoyed and celebrated even as duties and responsibilities are discharged. None are parasitic!"

"On the other hand, there are these categories of people, very normal looking, charming in their talk and action... and yet subtly sick - *roga vyaktitvams* - sick personalities. Eternally insecure, they, individually or collectively seek to dominate through negative emotions. Many times, it is observed to run in the family, mostly afflicting the females though the males also exhibit it. Take the case of *vaatonmada vyakti* - with hysterical personality problems - they have a provocative behaviour; always needing to be in the centre of attention in any group interactions; if ignored will feel terribly rejected; using shallow, impressionistic and exaggerated words in conversations - gossipy; emotionally shifting, from great cravings, love, affection to hate, and can become hysterical in their expressions of disagreements. These people are easily influenced and get cheated frequently - hence their deep suspicions, frequently misplaced. Over a period of time and several painful interactions, we find these personality traits and patterns as opposed to a different class of behaviour exhibited by 'normal' folks. Or take the case of *aasamajika vyaktitvam* - with anti-social personality problems - always wanting to go against set norms, especially *dharmic* ones, for gain or convenience and to seek attention; cannot deliver on the discharge of duties or obligations; irritable, intemperate and aggressive; impulsive - in purchases, decision making or gratifications; deceitful and reckless in interactions. Such characters cannot lead an independent life. They are parasitic! Or take the case of *avalipta vyakti* - having narcissistic personality problems - having an uncommon talent or two - say in music; always thinking that they are special or unique and therefore entitled to all favours

**Observe them detachedly over a period of time even as you calmly interact over power decisions or conflicts - Charm, rage, tears and cold shrewdness mark them out! Accountability, personal performance, sacrifice and integrity are anathema to them - with excuses galore of why they have not delivered. When some see through the game, such folks are demonised so that the manufactured lies made to coverup their problematic history is kept intact. More their vulnerabilities exposed more their emotional viciousness in hitting back!**

from those around; preoccupied with fantasies of beauty, talent, power, successes etc; manipulative and exploitative of those around, they are arrogant and haughty; for all the sweet words, one can easily see through in them the lack of empathy for others. Or the worst of the lot, take the case of the *parimiti vyakti* – with borderline personality problems – they usually have the traits of all the above three – *vaatonmada*, *aasamajika*, *avalipta* and in addition, can be very moody with a great fear of abandonment or rejection – perhaps mostly imagined one. Leave the person out of the social or activity loop briefly and panic attack sets in -- frantic negative efforts are put in to get back into the loop – typically using abusive expressions to have the ego-trip to offset the fear. They have a persistent feeling of emptiness and therefore recurrently expresses suicidal threats, gestures or self-mutilating behaviour – perhaps to get their way; impulsive in decisions and gratifications they have intense unstable inter-personal relationships – swinging between extremes of intimacy and hate; they express inappropriate and intensely deep anger or rage when perhaps implicit expectations do not get fulfilled; they can be paranoid – always suspicious and if married, suspecting spousal fidelity; they bear delusional grudges for the long term – to be used manipulatively to putdown their 'adversary' and gain sympathy from the unsuspecting; they feel threatened and perceive attacks even in areas of minor

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disagreements! Just imagine a person marrying one with the above problems. Many times, the family members of these *rogis* reinforce and support these behavioural patterns – since they too are afflicted similarly to some degree - their blindspots. If they do not trigger these emotionally outrageous events periodically, they loose their sense of identity! Such is the addiction for trouble in these *rogis*. Such families invariably crave for power and wealth, have a trail of problematic life episodes and therefore seek to coverup – they are mostly successful with all the gullible folks. These people are very charming and nice in the first instance. Observe them detachedly over a period of time even as you calmly interact over power decisions or conflicts -

***These negative experiences obtained from interacting with such rogis are a surefire way to boost up one's inner resolve for becoming a better human being, and applying oneself intensely to lifelong Vedanta sadhana and devotion to God.***

Charm, rage, tears and cold shrewdness mark them out! Accountability, personal performance, sacrifice and integrity are anathema to them – with excuses galore of why they have not delivered. When some see through the game, such folks are demonised so that the manufactured lies made to coverup their problematic history is kept intact. More their hypocrises exposed, more their emotionally vicious hit backs! Power mongers and politicians routinely do it. Infact, those with any of these personality disorders look 'ordinary' and 'normal', and many will doubt such assessments. Artists, merchants, bankers, the rich ones, routinely exhibit the above - more so under stress."

Appaji stopped. Sugita and Aliyaji took a long breath. The silence was deafening. Many memories swirled by. Memories of so many unreasonable behaviours and traits exhibited by different folks over the past several years. The darkness of the night, the few flickering lamps in the locked temple, the distant howling of the village dogs, and these human trait descriptions added to an eerie ambience. But then the big questions remained. What do we do? What about interacting with such folks lifelong? What about ourselves? Aliyaji bluttered out, "Appaji, how do we know that we are not afflicted by these ourselves?" Sugita added, "Are these diseases of the mind curable? What do we do if these are our own kith and kin?" Appaji closed his eyes, his body was taut in *asana*. Several deep breaths later, he continued, "For the advanced sadhaka on the road to 'Self-development', obligatory daily interactions with such kinds of people is a blessing of *Mahamaya* – specimens whose very persona demonstrates the futility and transient nature of the ego and therefore reasons why the sadhaka needs to breakout of the bondage! With deep and longtime devotion, we are blessed to see that much of these evil perpetrators thrive because of our own unconscious negative emotional transactions

***Only by one's own inner tapas and resolve can one bring in the inner transformations to get out of these entangling sorrowful traits – those afflicted can only help themselves out. The biggest problem is that such folks violently live in denial and any suggestions to point out these will only create more problems.***

with them. The Sadhaka has to be very careful of the pitfalls too – being subtly conceited can result in one falsely labeling and stereotyping such folks. Our own minds might play nasty games due to these prejudices! One has to be very careful in making these assessments, spread over several months and done several times. People do change, for better or for worse. Always be positive and sidestep unless you need to confront. Ofcourse, the vedanta sadhakas have to ensure that they do not get caught into the spiral of action and reaction in these emotional interactions. It is during these times that they are under intense emotional pressure to match up to the emotional expressions of these wretched folks – vicious, vulgar and violent. In such provocative situations, the sadhakas will calm down their own unconscious *vasanas* through *kshama* – forgiveness so that there is no trace of resentment and then calmly express their value-oriented responses consciously. It is

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afterall the same *atman* in them as in the emotionally afflicted lot. *Kshama* does not mean that the provocateur is allowed to get away with the damages done. Many times they are held accountable in a silent way. Think with *viveka* and design the interaction such their tricks are defeated! Discharge your duties successfully but you might loose the credit and the rewards thereof! That is the *thyaga* needed - sacrifice from your side. Consistently stand by 'your moral choice' with a clear message as to when the 'penalty' – the way your moral choice may typically be perceived - would be revoked. Very clearly it is only on a sustained change in their behaviour. Having nurtured the ruggedness to withstand and overpower these *vasanas* – first within oneself and then while interacting with such folks, the sadhaka continually asserts his or her authentic independence even while expressing empathy and compassion to help them out from their periodic situational mess. It is so difficult to figure out what the sadhaka is upto, using the commoners reasoning here! Most people would be totally befuddled! And yet

***We, simple sadhakas, should humbly and sincerely pray to God, to first relieve ourselves of the miseries of interacting with them and then for their enlightenment in these matters and subsequent happiness.***

there is total rationale here!” Sugita quickly recognised – these words helped her understand why Srimo did what he did – many times she was uncomfortable with his responses to the vulgar aggressiveness he had faced – he looked like a loser!. Was he really?

***The biggest problem is that such worldly folks violently live in denial and any suggestions to point out these will only create more problems. In fact, if they are not serious in changing for good, they will learn these terminologies and use it to turn the tables on you!***

Or was it that our worldly ego makes us interpret him that way inspite of his being successful in whatever he had set out to do?

### **Sadhana is Positive Love & Positive Living**

Few more minutes of silence. Appaji continued, “How do we know if we are not exhibiting any of these traits? Well, become a sadhaka! Sadhana is not pulling a long face, being sullen for years on end! It is keeping the body, mind and the intellect in tune with the highest state of an individual identity – the *atman* – in its *anandamaya kosha* form! And thus positively live and enjoy to celebrate every moment of our life! However, we also keep track of the flip side of happiness in our everyday experiences. These negative experiences obtained from interacting with such *rogis* with positive love and affection are a surefire way to boost up one's inner resolve for becoming a better human being, and applying oneself intensely to lifelong Vedanta sadhana. Can you all do it? Remember, you all have already paid this price – several times over the past! Are these personality problems curable? Not in the short term! Long term! Almost lifelong! Sri Sarada Devi had such people around here. And look how she lived her exemplary life! I repeat what I said earlier, with *shraddha* and *bhakti* towards our *ishta*, the effective *gunas* that will help us in building up our calm responses through positive and true love are: *vairagya*, *titiksha*, *thyaga*, *dhaya*, *kshama* and *swatantrata*! Only by one's own inner *tapas* and resolve can one bring in the needed inner transformations to get out of these entangling sorrowful traits. The biggest problem is that such worldly folks violently live in denial and any suggestions to point out these will only create more problems. In fact, if they are not serious in changing for good, they will learn these terminologies and use it to turn the tables on you! Scandalous tales may make the social rounds that you are creating problems. Ofcourse, when the contradictions stare back

at the proponents, it is dismissed as an attribute of your 'split' personality. You will end up paying a big price – emotional, economic, social - for any such adventure to enlighten these folks. In addition, they cover up such observable behavioural traits so it becomes all the more difficult for others to discern the underlying problems. Only after the relationship becomes friendly, can we gingerly approach them with indirect inputs. Like suggesting various *vrats* and *prayaschits* to pray to their *ishta*! Suggest that they practise *satsangha*, *pranayama* and *yoga* regularly. On developing a good degree of trust and respect, help them get convinced about their true nature – the *atman*, which is different from all their emotions and feelings. Help them understand and cultivate the detached awareness of their feelings. And get them to commit to change, duely acknowledging their emotional problems and perhaps the loose tongue! Acknowledging the damage done over the years, gently puncturing myths and resolving longtime grudges. Myths, which were unconsciously built up to cover their tracks. Yes, you need to be nurturing and yet benevolently demanding. Work with them on what is the emotionally right inter-personal behaviours, reinforcing it again and again. It calls for their developing the right self-control of their emotions as well as in tolerating the distress caused due to their occasional failures of their controls and right inter-personal behaviours! That is the *sadhana* of truly helping them out. A very tough long job wherein you might get burnt out, perhaps several times. We, simple *sadhakas*, should humbly and sincerely pray to God, to first relieve ourselves of the miseries of interacting

with them and then for their enlightenment in these matters, for their change and subsequent happiness. Ofcourse, qualified *vaidyas* or doctors can play a more appropriate role temporarily! The only long term cure is *adhyatmic sadhana*! Where *sadhakas* are not in their midst, it is always best to leave it to the qualified and experienced *vaidyas* to do the needful. In general, *sadhakas* should never attempt in counselling the afflicted worldly folks.” The assessment was loud and clear! Sugita and Aliyaji became quiet with the prognosis, diagnosis as well as the cure!

### Deva Krupa – Nature will truly nurture!

Appaji looked around. The village was almost going to sleep – a few flickering lamps in the houses nearby just waiting to be put off. The half moon was high in the sky. Dinner was almost forgotten. Appaji smiled at the silent couple – Sugita and Aliyaji. He asked, “Coming back to the original issue...!” Aliyaji as well as Sugita interrupted and said in one voice, “Yes, we will do all that is necessary! To aid him in his mission to reach out to all those Vedanta *sadhakas*, men, women and families, or those interested, in similar situations, quietly, and effectively!. To help these *Sadhakas* who are proactive and interested in their *adhyatmic* progress as well as in helping those around, suffering from these personality disorders and afflictions. More so, to reach out through such *sadhakas*, the children involved. We will not just be true trustees of your wealth to be used for this purpose but will also contribute ours, our friends and well-wishers! Yes, it looks unconventional for him to do this apart from his deep caring for his family, his kids as well as for his work and profession. It is difficult to understand why he is doing what he is doing but we shall seek to understand it right. We shall be trustworthy trustees! Not just for him, but to all such who are in similar circumstances and doing such *sadhana*.” Appaji leaned over to hear them more clearly. They almost repeated it.

Appaji reminded them, “Many *rishis* over the ages, emphatically ask all *grihastas* to serve all true *sadhus*, *sanyasis* and *sadhakas* – invariably keeping this in mind!”

And then he solemnly stoodup, did a *manasika namaskar* to Lord Ganesha and moved over, leading them to their residence nearby for a simple late dinner. A very pregnant silence enveloped them into the deep dark night. A lot food for thought. And action!

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