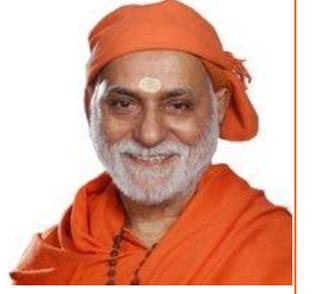


Austerity at the Level of the Mind and Intelligence

prabhāta-raśmiḥ

13 July 2011



Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

I was speaking about austerity during the past few days. I would like to speak about it again.

Yajna, *Daana* and *Tapas* are three disciplines, virtues, or pursuits, humanity can never avoid, or humanity should always incorporate in its life. About *yajna*, as I had mentioned, it is any kind of an act which you do, dedicated to the supreme reality, which sustains this universe including your body.

Daana is giving your possessions, wealth or any other form of money to people who are not related to you through blood or matrimony with a lot of fondness, humility, and appeal. "Please receive this and make use of it, I shall be blessed and enriched", with this kind of an attitude, whatever you give, to those people who do not come within the orbit of blood or matrimonial relationships, this is *daana*.

And *tapas* is completely resting on your body. As I always say, *tapas* can be two fold. Either it is elimination of whatever you otherwise do generally, or incorporation of something new which you are not used to doing as a daily routine. So, it can be in the way of an elimination or renunciation, it can also be in the way of an incorporation. That is how we have one time meal, no meal a day, and so many other forms of discipline, one day mouna, etc. Similarly incorporating a new routine means what? Normally you don't go to a temple, so you decide that "Once in a week, I will go to the temple, circumambulate there, chant some prayers, do pranams etc. etc., and come back." Say, maybe half-an-hour you spend. That is a new routine. Suppose you start doing it every day, it becomes all the more. This is a new routine.

Suppose you decide that I will chant one or two or three chapters of Bhagavad Geeta every day, which is not otherwise a secular part of your life. That is also an austerity. The austerity begins from the body and sensory level. It can progress into the mouth or tongue level. That is how you sit in a place, chant or recite hymns and other things.

Now the visible part is over. You have to get into, within the body. There the austerity should be in the level of the mind! What does the mind do? It thinks, raises emotions. So your austerity should be in the way of introducing a thought or a set of thoughts and trying to revolve them in the mind. This is how mantra japa, *bhagawat-smaranam*, etc., become part of our life.

Similarly you generate some special emotions, cherish them and pursue them. Say, "I will be loving to all people, I will be considerate to the others, I will accommodate everybody." Any kind of a discipline or refinement which you introduce in the mind level, that discipline should belong to the mind and mind should be the factor, which pursues, preserves and reinforces it. This is something very important. The mere memory, memory of God, memorizing God - that is a great austerity.

And what is the austerity in the level of the intelligence? You start employing the intelligence, not for any secular objective, but for something different. That is how spirituo-philosophical contemplations have come. The quest for God, the quest for truth, seeking after the Self - these are all matters which the intelligence alone can employ itself and pursue. This becomes *jnana-tapas*.

Austerity where knowledge becomes the goal, knowledge becomes the means, and knowingness becomes the nature! In Bhagavad Geeta, Krishna says,

na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitramiha vidyate

(Bhagavad Geeta 4.38)

In this world, there is nothing so purifying as wisdom. Say the entire Srimad Bhagavatam, the Bhagavad Geeta, Ramayana, Mahabharatam, the Vedas, the Upanishads, so many *prakarana-granthas*; all of them are what? They are nothing but forms and measures of knowledge. If you start reading them, trying to understand them, my dear souls, please understand that it is the best form of austerity!

Going to the temple, worshipping before the deity, doing this, doing that, chanting, running about, doing worship, spending a lot of money, bringing a great lot of flowers, all these are there. I don't say no. But *jnana-tapas* is the one which takes place in the inner most level and also which has the best of effect. Because if the personality has to change, the change has to come from knowledge and purity. Purity is related to the mind, and knowledge is related to the intelligence.

In this ashram, if you observe us, particularly we three of us, you will find we are always given to *jnana-tapas*. I have found when we suggest to people, our own brahmacharis and brahmacharinis, this is how you have to understand, you have to think, etc. There are occasions when we feel a kind of an impasse.

If I ask them, "Do you understand?", they say, "Yes!"

"Then why don't you implement it?"

"I am not able to!"

Just imagine the gap between understanding something and pursuing it wholeheartedly.

Our children here, Cultural Heritage Class children, very rarely I advise them. So I pick up the issue of truthfulness. I say "I had spoken to you about truthfulness etc. What happened? Are you speaking lies?"

"Yes."

"How many of you? Please raise your hands."

In that they are truthful. So they raise their hands.

I said, "All of you had raised their hands earlier, and we had come to a resolution that we would not speak lies. What happened?"

"Swamiji, we try, but it is not possible!"

Just see! *satyānnāsti paro dharmah*. This is the motto we selected for FRNV - *satyānnāsti paro dharmah*.

There is no dharma, source or power of sustenance which is greater than being truthful. The entire country is suffering from untruthfulness. Is it a surprise at all? Just see, the elected Government, elected for administering the country, to the welfare of the people, ousting the British Government, now what are we hearing? Everybody is involved in making the wrong selection, in covering up the fact and truth, and robbing the country, robbing everybody of the wealth. What is this?

satyānnāsti paro dharmah

So, if you take up truthfulness, this truthfulness is a fact, you alone know whether you are truthful or not. How many violations or deflections took place? Nobody else knows. So, what is the austerity? You examine your own mind, make inner observations and find out whether "I was clinging to truth or not? Did I violate and what was the violation for? Where is the impasse there?"

When you know that something ... I have my famous example - you are sipping a cup of tea, almost sip, the cup has touched your lip, I say, "Don't drink, it contains poison." What will you do? You will keep it away! In the same manner, when you know any particular trait or otherwise is in you, which is undesirable, which is very demotional and destructive, then can you not simply eschew it? So that eschewing factor is the will and wish in your system. Neither the will nor the wish belongs to the body or the senses or even to the tongue, it belongs to the inner personality.

So, your inner personality should have a knowledge sensibility, an emotional sensibility, a wilfulness sensibility, as a result of which the moment you know something is bad, the system will keep away from it. This is called the knowledge austerity.

Similarly we are told, "All are Brahman. I am Brahman." Bah! All are Brahman! So, see Brahman everywhere. "I am not able to!" Why are you not able to? Why? You have no respect for knowledge? You have no respect for the scriptures? See the disparity, the contradiction, the variance! All these things should strike. Now unearth all of them, remove all of them, become purer and purer, more and more enlightened. This whole process that goes on inside is knowledge austerity. Nobody will know about it. But this is the highest, the subtlest, the loftiest, and the most sublime level of austerity.

In our ashram, for some reason or the other, ... see, when I went before my Guru and sought brahma vidya deeksha, I never wanted anything. I wanted to have something by virtue of which my mind would be alright. I did not speak or think so much about the intelligence at that time. Ever since then I am only involved with my mind, intelligence, you can say - ego, heart etc.

It is a wonderful process! And what we have here in this ashram is inner renunciation, not outer renunciation. The renunciation - ultimately of what? Ultimately of possessiveness and ego. As long as possessiveness and ego are not left, renunciation is not true. All the other renunciations are secondary, third level, fourth level, fifth level, they will be ancillary to true renunciation, but not renunciation proper. All these points I would like you to think about!

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

* * *



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Venginissery, P.O. Ammadam, Trichur, Kerala - 680563, India

Email: ashram1@gmail.com; Website: <http://www.swamibhoomanandatirtha.org>