

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Part-2

Meditating on Namaha leads us to what is really necessary in order for the betterment of ourselves and the betterment of this world. It is what we should strive to cultivate in our life, it is our life's true purpose. And in Sanksrit and Telugu, it is defined by just two words, "vinayam" and "vidhe:yatha".

Vinaya means polite conduct, modesty, and humility. Vidhe:yatha means obedience to what one ought to do; it is virtue guided by good principles.

Humanity should cultivate these good qualities and put them into practice, because, having these firmly established in our mind and heart, will naturally blossom into respect for our elders, respect for our sa:sthras, respect for our Teachers, integrity, dignity, pure love for God, and compassion for our fellow living beings. This refined approach to life is what we must all constantly strive towards.

So, does merely blindly chanting, Namaha and saying Namasthe: to everyone move us towards this goal? No. We need to recite this wonderful manthra with a proper understanding of its deeper meaning.

"Namaha" in its literal meaning is "bending or prostration". All of us express us it in a superficial sense when we prostrate before the deity in the temple. We even make our kids perform this act, calling them from outside where they are playing with their friends at the end of pooja, and asking them to prostrate in front of the altar. Our kids seem to have figured out a shortcut to doing this, because even before we know it, they have run into the room, completed their prostration and are racing back outside to play.

Verbally, we all say "namaha" quite often, too, whether or not we mean it. Our boss makes us work well into the night, and

often-times all weekend long. We do it if only to keep our jobs, and face the stress of not only working, but of missing good quality time with our family and friends. But, Monday morning comes around, and there we are, bleary-eyed but with a smile on our face, ready to say "Good Morning" or "Namasthe" to him/her in our most polite way. Thank Goodness nobody knows what we really want to say.

But, merely bending physically or saying "namaha" really achieves nothing. What is really implied by the term "namaha" is a bending of the heart, a genuine feeling of inspiration to live a life of humble obedience to all that is good, and a genuine desire to respect and follow the teachings of our sa:stras and those who bring them to us, our Acha:ryas.

To gain this, we must be willing to bend both with the body and with the soul, without pretention or false ego. And, to have the ability to do this is something that we must constantly beseech God to provide us.

Those whose hearts are dedicated to this spirit of cultivating good qualities will always see good things come to them, and will always have the true respect of others.

In a beautiful passage in a discourse HH said that, a deal is made between the Divine and the spiritual seeker. Making a deal with God should not be surprising, because we make deals with God all the time: "Oh God in the temple, I am breaking 18 coconuts and offering them to you; please let me pass my exams." Or, "Lord, if you bless me with that visa to the USA, I will be able to place lots of money in the hundi the next time I visit India."

In the Upanishad, however, the prayer is far more noble. While on superficial levels it is addressed to Agni, the deity of Fire, in actuality, it really addresses He who



is the Soul to Agni and all the universe, the Supreme Lord, Sriman Narayana:

*agne: naya supattha: ra:ye: asman
visva:ni de:va vayuna:ni vidvan |
yuyo:dhyasmajjuhu ra:name:no
bhu:yistta:m the: nama ukthim vidhe:ma ||*

The prayer beseeches the Lord to take us on the noble path, the path that leads to all wealth; it also beseeches Him to remove all our sins, both the ones that we have committed knowingly and those that we have committed unknowingly. In return, with our hearts filled with complete devotion to Him that comes from the knowledge of His wondrous qualities, we will look to the Lord, His every desire and His every action and think "namaha" with adoration.

Some important things to note in this prayer: The term "wealth" is not intended to imply just material prosperity alone, but all that is necessary for one's upliftment including respectability, integrity, nobility and the support and company of people who admire us. Also, note that the verse does not say that we are to going to merely chant "namaha" to the Lord, but will think it, experience it, in other words, feel it in our hearts.

With the moving of the heart toward this level, comes the cultivation of good humane qualities, integrity, and the respect and companionship of those who respect us. Interestingly, our sa:sthras speak of the company of those who admire and support us.

Sri Rama in his mission to rescue Sita and liberate Lanka, was always in the company of four good men: Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sugriva, and Angada. This, along with many other things, was proof positive of his uncountable good qualities.

Indeed, if there is one human being in this world who had perfected the noble vinaya and vidhe:yatha, it was Sri Rama.



His heart was so good, his actions so well-intentioned, his desire to bring good to the world so great, his respect for his elders and teachers so unswerving, that it is said that his name and his fame are known in every corner of the universe.

And two men who admired and worshipped Sri Rama rose to a level of fame that they will always be remembered by every person from India, Kalidasa and Valmiki. While Kalidasa's fame is known in his poetry, Valmiki experienced Sri Rama completely in his heart, and thus, his work is considered indisputable as being the only true source on Sri Rama and His Great Deeds.

It is the outpourings of Valmiki's heart, filled with love for the Lord in the form of a human being, that is Sri Rama:yanam. Since it is a work of such love and admiration, it is little wonder that it can still move even the most modern and western-educated Indian to tears in its sheer beauty and pathos.

This is the level of heart that we need in following vinaya and vidhe:yatha, a virtual soul-stirring feeling of humility, love, and respect that naturally fills us with good intentions and good qualities.

It is this heart filled with love, respect, integrity, and servitude, that opens the doors to God's Unconditional and Loving Grace, which we have shut out from our lives for countless eons because of selfish attachment to our false ego. Such a Grace will give us the strength and inspiration such that wherever we are, whatever we do, we will be blissful in the knowledge that all that we are in service to Him and is for the benefit of the world.

Let us all seek to cultivate these good qualities, and in doing so, live a good and noble life, one that will allow us to serve both God and His World.
