

I

Need

Deep

Introspection-of

Atman

NBS BABUJI

(inspired by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda)

India

Literary works of Shri	Babuji and their pivot points
<p>1. God is in our land - Kshetra</p> <p>This work came into existence because of the experiences he had in a Siva Kshetra (Kshetra - Divine place), Thiruvannamalai.</p>	<p>7. India - Soothra</p> <p>This work holds some intricate explanations and spiritual equations from the Indian philosophy, in simple terms. Soothra means equations.</p>
<p>2. Siva Gnana Bodham - Sasthra</p> <p>This is an interpretation of a Saiva Sasthra (Sasthra - scripture based on wisdom), Siva Gnana Bodham.</p>	<p>8. Layman's notches - Patra</p> <p>This work is about what a layman can understand and work on philosophy, Indian philosophy to be more precise. It also talks about some social and political issues.</p>
<p>3. Siva Puranam - Sthothra</p> <p>This is an interpretation of a Saiva Sthothra (Sthothra - Devotional scripture), Siva Puranam.</p>	<p>9. Journey of life - Yatra</p> <p>Yatra means the journey with a destination point. Our life should also be a Yatra - a journey towards a specific destination. When we come across the milestones of right understanding, we can be sure that we are on the right way. This work deals about such right understandings of life.</p>
<p>4. A bon voyage - Matra</p> <p>This work is a testing scale of the divinity that exists within a layman (and within everyone). Matra means 'a testing standard'.</p>	<p>10. On the way - Gothra</p> <p>This is the author's autobiography. It will be in accordance with the social and religious backgrounds of India. Still, the lessons that appear in this work are common to all.</p>
<p>5. Glimpses of Light - Netra</p> <p>This work emerged from the views of spiritual eye or perceptions. Netra means eye.</p>	
<p>6. Thus Spake India - Hothra</p> <p>Hothra means a religious ritual done before the fire. This work is a spirited religious ritual done before the fire of Unbeaten Truth.</p>	

Preface

The one who feels this need and puts efforts on that need either through emotional means (Bakthi – devotion) or through intellectual means (Gnana – intellect) is an ideal Indian.

Most of us born in materiality, study about materiality, live in materiality and die without the true knowledge about ourselves. India deals with this true knowledge, the knowledge about the spirit or spirituality. Due to the influence of foreign cultures, adamant scientific development of the world and of our own indifferent policies, this knowledge is ignored by many. We are in a need to revive the knowledge about ourselves wherein lies the solution for everything else.

Using material knowledge, one could perform all the marvelous tasks which had been marked as impossible at one point of time. And still we fix lots of 'impossible' tasks to be sorted out in future. There is no end for this material eagerness and zeal. When one wants to put an end to this material zeal, then starts the quest of the spirit. The spiritual man doesn't get affected by the materiality but plays with it "from a distance". As he goes farther and farther from material attachments, he realises his true identity as one with the Spirit. He stays out of or stays in

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material life as per the divine will. But his consciousness is always centered in the Spirit or spirituality.

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The taste

Words are mixed to give a taste;

If the taste is missing, the words go waste.

Fix the words right and the taste glows bright,

If you can't see it, better check your sight.

The taste is in you - the taste is in me;

The taste is in everyone and it makes us free.

The taste is the goal;

The taste is the road;

The taste is the soul;

The taste is the world.

It goes either way; it's like a knife,

Play it wisely and enjoy your life.

The ocean and the river

The ocean water goes up as clouds;

The cloud cools down and pours.

The rain water forms a little stream;

The little stream joins the big stream.

The big stream becomes a river;

The river traverses all over.

At last it merges into the infinite ocean;

The ocean welcomes the drifted with passion.

The Cosmic Eye

Mother and Dad,
Good and bad,
 Clever and mad,
 Joy and sad...
All are one
In the eyes of One.

Night and day,
Fight and gay,
 Land and water,
 Wound and laughter...
All are one
In the eyes of One.

Fame and name,
Shame and blame,
 Well and ill,
 Heaven and hell,
All are one
In the eyes of One.

Who is the One?
Who is the One?
 He is the One
 Who had risen
Above the world of dream
Into the Spiritual beam.

Spiritual alphabets

A for absolution

B for benediction

C for compassion

D for devotion

E for emancipation

F for fusion

G for gratification

H for humanization

I for interrogation

J for justification

K for keenness

L for limitless

M for meditation

N for neutralization

O for optimization

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P for predetermination

Q for qualification

R for realisation

S for salvation

T for tranquility

U for unity

V for virtuous

W for wakefulness

X for xenial

Y for yoga

Z for zealous

These nouns and objectives have some relationship with the Spirit. The young people should be taught how they are related to their being. As already said, education is not only for teaching all about the world; it should also teach one about one's own being.

Xenial

After reading the spiritual alphabets, a friend asked, “What does that ‘xenial’ mean?”

Xenial means being friendly with the guests; showing hospitality to the guests. If a host is friendly and kind to a foreigner, it means the host is xenial.

We all are guests to this world. God is the host. He is xenial; we aren't. We forget that we are only the guests here. We forgot our home and wrongly take this temporary asylum as our home. We behave as if we were the owners. We think that this world belongs to us.

When one realizes one's own nature, one becomes xenial. He becomes the host. The host remains detached to everything he owns and the guests remain attached to everything they do not own. He is centered in His home. His home is just within himself. Though, he is the real boss, he doesn't claim anything of this world as his own. He leaves everything to his guests and helps all his guests for staying better in the world. He works to help the deserving in reaching their ‘homes’.

Layman's sayings

One

The brilliant is one who recognises and appreciates the brilliance of others and also has the capacity to prove his own.

Two

The brave not only makes use of opportunities, besides- he makes opportunities.

Three

One who mastered himself cannot be mastered by any one.

Four

Purity is Beauty.
Truthfulness is Wealth.
Discipline is Strength.

Five

I never lose, since I wish only what I deserve and put all my efforts toward it. If I don't get it, I am the least bothered. For me, it is the efforts that matter...not the results.

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Six

Noble people do not live by bread alone; they live by love and respect.

Seven

Learn from the past;
Plan for the future;
ACT NOW.

Eight

To have faith in yourself is bronze; To make others have faith in you is silver;
To have faith in God is golden; To make God have faith in you is diamond.

Jeevan Muktham

We have seen the words 'Self Realisation' in many places.

Who is Self Realised?

Vasishtha Maharishi explains the state of Jeevan Muktha (the Self realised) to Rama as follows:

“The Self realized attains complete satisfaction and peace; he has control over his mind and senses and dwells permanently in the realm of Atma (the Self). His mind is pure as he is away from all sorts of attachments. He has no concern for supernatural powers; only ordinary beings would want them.”

“The one who has sunk in Sathva Guna (Noble, compassionate and righteous state of mind), if he slips down and gets mean manners, he gets himself pushed down to lower states of consciousness.”

“Similarly, when Atma (Self or soul) falls into Prakruthi (the creation), it goes down to a lower state of Jeeva (soul with a body).”

“The Jeeva gets pain and pleasures, again and again, as per his deeds.”

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“Dropping the desires which stand as the source to enslavement is the way to liberation. Mind is the source for both enslavement and liberation. So, one has to win the mind through the mind. The mind which is controlled by wisdom thinks with clarity.”

“The Jeeva has three forms: Sthula (Gross or material), Sukshuma (subtle) and Uthama (The ultimate or the perfect).”

“The physical body which has senses, stands as the reason for pains and pleasures; it is the Sthula Sareera (Material form) of Jeeva.”

“The will that contains and generates desires is the subtle body.”

“The one that neither has a beginning nor an end; the one that exists eternally without getting bound by changes; the one that dwells in the pure ever-conscious realm of the Spirit is the Uthama Sareera (The ultimate body).”

“One has to release oneself from the gross and subtle bodies and has to get established in one’s ultimate form.”

“The state of seeing everything as a mere witness is the state of Jeevan Muktha (the Self realized).”

“This is known as the fourth state. It has no bondage of Jakrat (waking state), Swapna (sleeping state) and Sushubthi, as it has no desires what so ever.”

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“The will which is in the form of desires has three traits: Gora (arrogance), Santha (peace) and Mooda (ignorance).”

“If these three traits do not exist, then there is no mind.”

“The state that has no mind is the state of Jeevan Muktha (the Self realized). All else are suppressed in this state.”

“There is no mind, intelligence, will and ego – here.”

“Some call this state as Atma (The Self); some call it Wisdom; some call it Iswarathwam (all encompassing).”

“Let it be anything, if the will and all other desires which have their roots in the will are kept in check, it is the highest state of Atma (the Self).”

“If one executes action from this state, it won't bind him, since there is no sensual attachment to his action.”

“So, you too Rama, renounce everything inside and execute actions outside. This is the state of Jeevan Muktha.”

A story from Purana

The Universal Father (Lord Shiva) and Mother of Nature (Goddess Parvathi) once gave a test to their sons Lord Ganesa and Lord Muruga. If there is a test, there ought to be a prize. The one who completes circumambulation of the world in first place will get a ripe mango.

Lord Muruga, God of Vairagya and Gnana started His travel on His peacock. Lord Ganesa, God of Faith and Devotion started His travel on His mouse. Lord Muruga flew around the world. But Lord Ganesa circumnavigated His own Parents who sat just closer to Him. Obviously, Lord Ganesa was the first one to complete the circumambulation – though what He orbited was different from what Lord Muruga orbited. Lord Ganesa was declared the winner and was gifted the ripened mango on the ground that orbiting one's parents is equal to orbiting the world.

Almost everyone in India (particularly in Tamil Nadu) knows this story. I got the following philosophical interpretation within myself:

The Lord of the Universe - The Spirit, and The Divine Mother - The Nature are our Parents. This body is the result of both – that's why we call them Parents. External worship and internal worship – both these two help us to realize the Spirit, the Truth. They are like brothers, inseparable.

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Here in this story, Lord Muruga represents external worship and Lord Ganesa represents internal worship. External worship tries to find the Truth through external means and travels in multicolored paths (on peacock). The internal worship is directly related to the realization of the Spirit inside.

The all pervasive Spirit controls the Prana of the living beings either through external means or through internal means (or both). When the Prana is not controlled it becomes adamant like a troublesome beast. When it is under one's own control, it becomes friendly. When we could train our Prana with devotion and vairagya we can literally sit on it and can drive it to the desired destination. If we fail to train our Prana, it rides on our back and drives us hither and thither.

The one who had well trained His Prana knows that the destination is well inside. He sees his parents so closer, in fact within himself. He realizes that God is everywhere including one's own Self – within one's own land. He gets proof of his spirituality through his own experiences. He listens to Nadha and sees Bindhu within himself. On mastering this, the individualized Spirit is awarded Self realization (the ripened mango). The Self realized is the God realized. Though this path appears to be shorter, it is equally tougher too; not all can tread on this path.

We can find our inseparable Parents – 'God' to say in a single word, the other way also i.e through the multicolored paths based on external means of worship. It

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might be simpler, but it may take many lives and at last it too leads one to the inner vision.

The proper ways of external worship are explained in Agama sastras. Those who are truly interested and deserving can know more about the inner worship in Hamsopanishad.

Wisdom and love

Bliss or Peace is the ultimate for those who are in the wisdom path. Love is the ultimate for those who are emotional. Those who are rational do something in their terms for the sake of happiness. Those who are emotional do something in their terms for the sake of love.

To define love in simple terms – it is simply unconditional, unselfish and pure compassion towards all manifestations. To define wisdom in simple terms – it is something rational, logical and steadfast approach towards self realization.

For those who are loving in nature, to be loved and to love is the very deciding factor of life. Everything else comes only after love. They cannot restrain themselves from love. From them, love will be overflowing spontaneously – all the time. No need for any logic here. Why they love? Whom they love? They are not bothered about these rational questions. For them, everything is the embodiment of love – right from the biting mosquito to the beating sun.

They are one with love in and beyond all manifestations. In the shield of love, they remain unhurt. Even when their physical bodies are burnt, they stay cool inside.

Those who are full of wisdom also, inhibit the above quality. They remain unhurt of the external disturbances

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and remain cool internally. So both these paths hold similarities and go hand in hand. We can't think of wisdom path without the aspect of love. So too, we can't think of love path without wisdom element. In love path, ego or the false 'I' is suppressed to zero and what remains is the Spirit or the Self or God. In wisdom path, the true Self is realized through specific and rational methods; as a result the false 'I' vanishes automatically – what remains is the Spirit or the Self or God. Needless to say, whatever path one treads on, if one is sincere and faithful, it will lead one to the same end which is described in different terms.

Giving and Receiving

Sometimes, mothers make mistakes in their cooking; as a result the food loses its taste. The kids have the right and guts to say, “Mom, what have you made? It tastes so salty.”

This kid too is going to make such a comment.

In one of the spiritual retreats, I happened to see a video show on the Compassionate Mother (an American woman Saint – one of the direct disciples of an Indian Master) visit to India. We could see how overwhelmed and happy she was about India’s spiritual prowess and homogeneity. But the tongue of the commentator of the video slipped in the middle and it pinched my heart. I don’t know whether Mother permitted it or it happened without her knowledge.

The scene goes like this. Mata invites some poor Indian children and gives woolen cloths for their better survival. The commentator speaks out in the background: ‘The Christianity believes in giving – not receiving’. To my little knowledge no religion encourages ‘receiving’ or to say plainly ‘begging’ (this is what the commentator wanted to mean in that occasion). All creatures would prefer to ‘receive’ their needs directly from God. God delivers them either directly or through persons like Mata

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and other kind hearted persons. And this 'giving' has to be done whole heartedly – without any prejudices. If someone comes to your alms for food, what will you do? Either you will offer him food or you will not. If you choose the first one, never say this when you 'give': 'Giving is a good thing – receiving is a mean thing. I am giving – you are receiving'. Give the needy with kindness without thinking of any differences or better be silent. In the above instance, it seemed those Indian children didn't approach Mata for help out of their own interest. They had been asked to 'receive' the help.

We never 'give' anything of our own. What else one could own except God's love? We are just the instruments in the hands of God. God resides in both the 'giver' and the 'receiver'. By helping others, we are just helping ourselves.

India's material wealth had been exploited for centuries by foreign rulers. Indian businesses were crashed and the foreign goods were thrashed forcibly into the hands of Indians. In this process, circumstances made many Indians poor. India had been one of the richest countries in the world before she was invaded by the foreigners. Now, some of the people who belong to the religion who stole the wealth of India under broad day light say proudly that giving is their policy – not receiving. Of course, they don't 'receive' things and opportunities – they just 'grab' them from others. I am sure – not only Christianity – no religion will encourage 'grabbing'.

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India might have been poor in her material wealth in some pages of the history. But she never had been poor in her spiritual glory – throughout the times. And she is always happy in ‘sharing’ them with the world.

I post this view as per Master’s will.

Nayanars

I tried to place a display board ('God is in our land') in Thiruvannamalai Raja Gopuram. I felt it would be opt to place the board in the vicinity of Thiruvannamalai temple as this is the place where I got the command to spread the news that 'God is in our land'.

I approached the temple authorities. They gave the email address of the temple's decision making authority. I contacted them through email and also personally, explaining how serious I was about placing the display board in Thiruvannamalai temple. But at the end, my proposal was denied. The temple authority refused my plea saying, 'This is the temple where only the words of Godly people like Nayanars be placed. We cannot allow ordinary guys like you to place your own revelations.' I tried to convince him that there is no revelation like 'mine' and that it is only the will of God. But he was not convinced. I thought that God feels the other way and I dropped the idea of placing 'God is in our land' board within the Thiruvannamalai temple premises.

I feel it holds more significance and adaptability to all paths – not only to 'Saivism'. So, as per God's

will, it deserves to be placed in common where all people can have access to it.

But, here I am going to point out something else. The temple authority said that only the words of ‘Nayanars’ (the great devotees of Lord Siva in the state of Tamil Nadu) can be fixed in the temple premises – not that of a common man like me. I want to clarify that many of the Nayanars are common men. They didn’t possess or rather show any special powers. They are adorned only for their pure love for God. One of the Nayanars was a washerman; yet another was a hunter. There was also a Nayanar from the so called lower caste community; there was a king who is adorned as a Nayanar. So the social status did not prescribe the quality of Nayanars – it is the depth and commitment of their love towards God that makes one a Nayanar.

There had been no institutions to give the qualification of a ‘Nayanar’. Anyone can emerge from the path of Bakthi. This holds good to all the sects of Hinduism. Householders had attained the state of supreme consciousness; ordinary bottom-line workers had attained It; even thieves and murderers had not been denied the taste of the Truth.

I don’t mean to say that I am equal to a Nayanar. What I am trying to say is the external social status and life style will not decide who ‘Nayanars’ are.

Hindu and Varnashrama

An ideal Hindu feels for others. How one handles the feelings and pains of others differ from person to person.

If one determines to give moral strength to the suffering society, he is a Brahmin. If one comes forward to protect the properties and lives in the society, he is a Kshatriya. If one decides to help the needy people financially through creating earning opportunities, he is a Vysya. If one prefers to help the society through manual labour, he is a Sudra. The human kind needs all these services.

The Brahmin gets expertise and experience in moral and divine literature. The Kshatriya learns to be tough both physically and mentally to help the weaker section of people in times of need. The Vysya masters business and financial skills to increase earning opportunities. The Sudra learns technical and physical works and serves the human race in this aspect.

All these types of people get remuneration consequently. But the primary motto should be serving the society – taking part in the smooth driving of the society- feeling for the society. But now a days, every one works for one's own self and for one's own narrow circle. The social interest – feeling for everyone - is neglected and forgotten.

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Practically speaking, everyone does all the four types of services explained above. During worshipping God, one becomes a Brahmin. While safeguarding one's family and self, one becomes a Kshatriya. While earning remuneration for one's services, one becomes a Vysya. While applying physical labour in one's own garden or in one's own home, one becomes a Sudra. One cannot employ oneself in doing all activities all the time. So based on one's own nature and environment, one decides one's specific profession and social role. This is not decided by birth.

The present day Indian education focuses more on developing physical, technical and intellectual properties; even among these three, intellectual development is the priority for everyone. Physical well being and technical education are pushed down to lower places. Development of moral values is completely ignored. All these types of education are required in the society. No one is inferior. Everyone needs these services. If a particular type of education doesn't suit, one can always change one's pattern of education. Education system should be designed accordingly. If we could give balanced education based on our culture and vitality i.e on common moral values, then we would have balanced development through a positive and confident youth network. Suicides for getting low marks, crimes for not having got employment opportunities – such things will gradually stop.

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In the spiritual perspective, there is no cast system, all are equal. As we all are not equal in the realization of the fact that we all are equal, different classes of groups started to form on social grounds – which we call ‘cast’. The cast system should be decided only on the basis of one’s profession. Actually, it should be on the basis of one’s mental traits. As it is hard to judge one’s mental qualities clearly, we can make it this way at least. As per Hindu scriptures, there are only four casts as mentioned in the beginning. But practically speaking we have hundreds of casts and sub castes here. Here I am not talking about the cast system of other religions.

And the education system should teach all classes of people equally without giving up the moral element.

Aham Brahmasmi

This message appeared in my profile photo of a social media for some days. It literally means ‘I am God’, which means everyone is God. There is a story behind this.

Before this one, I had my original - I mean the material face, in my profile photo. One of my cousins, after a few months asked me to change my then profile photo stating that it looks like a one in the ‘wanted list’! I jovially replied him not to get envy on my ‘handsome’ profile photo and I also stated that he would become more envious if he happens to see some other ‘handsome’ picture of mine in my profile photo. Why I said this jovially is the then profile photo was liked by some of my friends.

For some, I appear to be a hero; for some, I appear to be a villain. As far as I am concerned, I am neither a hero, nor a villain; I am just a child, a conscious instrument in the hands of God.

After a few days, I thought it over – ‘is there anything in me which could be liked by all – equally forever?’ Instead of this, I could post some sceneries or quotes in my profile photo. But I don’t want to imitate others. I wanted to express my individuality in my way, without having needed to convince anyone.

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Then I thought about my web site which celebrates the divinity in all. This divinity is the only thing which can be liked by all without biases and this is the true identity of everyone. This truth is brought up in the ancient Hindu scriptures. All Hindus (those who feel for the pain of others) will not find any fault in this Upanishad quote. If one ridicules or criticizes this phrase, actually he/she is ridiculing or criticizing his/her own identity.

Our ignorance stands as a veil in realizing this truth in the depth of our consciousness. If we bring purity to our mind, then the pollution of ignorance disappears and the light of truth transpires. Bringing purity here means removing filthy thoughts through noble thoughts. At last, after driving away the undesired thoughts, even the desired thoughts are given up. Mind is clean without any thoughts – good or bad. Purity comes only at this stage. Only those who dwell in this stage could say ‘Aham Brahmasmi’.

I am thankful to my cousin – the God in my cousin – who made this layman God to think over one’s true identity.

Truthfulness

God is Truth. What is Truth? If we can find the answer, it means we find God too. There is also another saying by the realized souls: God is love. Everyone would have some definition about love though it may be a little hard for everyone to define what truth is. Love means simply loving someone or something. We all are in love; we love our children, we love our family and friends, we love our well wishers, we love our nation. This love always has a pivot point. It is the self (it is not the Self, but the self – the ego). If selfishness drives the love, then this is not the love that the realized beings talk about. Unselfish love is the Love that is identified as God. Unselfishness is the true love. This is the Truth. If one hangs on something for one's own good, then it would bind one. If one loves all for no specific reason, then it releases one from all bindings. The unselfishness shows one the Truth - the limitless, bondless, egoless identity of oneself. So unselfishness is regarded as the highest virtue in Hinduism. Thus, the direct meaning of Truthfulness is unselfishness. One can never be both selfish and truthful. To the extent one stays away from selfishness, to the extent one stands closer to the Truth.

Raja Harichandra is remembered till today not for that he stuck to the principle of 'not telling lies', but for that he did not lie for his own (selfish) merits. He refused to lie to claim his own possessions which were lost in a betting

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game. He ‘disregarded his own interests’ and stood unbiased. So, he has been taken as the role model for those who seek Truth.

If one tells a lie without any selfish motive but to protect an innocent, then it can be taken as an act of Truthfulness – unselfish love. If one loves or even pretends to love someone just for that it gives solace to the someone, then one is very much truthful in one’s love. If one pretends to love or even ‘truly loves’ someone for some personal benefits – not for that ‘the someone’ is genuinely happy about it, then one is neither truthful nor loving. The pivot point of ego, the Truth, the Love – these three cannot stand on the same line.

Ahankara (the ego or selfishness or one’s false identity) is the direct enemy to Atman (the Spirit or limitlessness or the Truth). When the point of Ahankara is erased, then one can feel the whole, the boundless being (God) within. He is for all.

The one who disregards one’s own interest and bothers for the pains of those around is the ideal Hindu (Himsaayaam Thuyatheya: sa: ...Hindhuri thyabitheeyathe). He need not have faith in God; he need not take up tough austerities; he need not be wise. Be unselfish and have a heart that beats for every being – then you are on the laps of God – Truth – Love.

The following account from the lives of ancient Indian sages, explains this.

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Once sage Savnaka visits the hermit of sage Bruhu. Sage Bruhu asks sage Savnaka, ‘Oh, Yogi, of all the virtues that a human abides, which one is superior? We have many noble virtues - truthfulness, self discipline, service to the society, honesty, humility, unselfishness and so on.’ Sage Savnaka asks him (sage Bruhu) to put this question to sage Padma in Nimisaaranya. Sage Bruhu goes there. He calls for sage Padma. The latter’s wife answers: ‘He has been to Surya loka (the sun), he will return after eight days’. Sage Bruhu waits for eight days. (The ancient sages of India know to travel beyond the planet, in the Milky way, through their astral body)

Sage Padma returns after eight days and asks sage Bruhu the purpose of his (sage Bruhu) visit. Sage Bruhu posts his question. Sage Padma replies as follows: “O, respected sir, if I tell you what I saw in Surya loka, you will get clarification. I saw a soul which had done noble deeds merging with the bright magnanimous sun. I asked the sun God about the noble virtue of the merged soul which brought it there. The sun God replied: ‘All those who live without selfishness and help others will achieve the status that this soul had achieved.’ So, unselfishness is the finest of all human virtues.”

Sage Bruhu thanks sage Padma and leaves with the answer.

Those who are unselfish may or may not take up actions. In either case, it is common goodness that is sought by the unselfish people.

Fake

If we observe nature, we can find that there is a fake object for almost all 'worthy' creation. I have to add the adjective 'worthy', because for useless objects, there is no need for a fake. For example, paddy will have a 'fake' paddy which is a long grass. But the grass does not need to have any fake for it. Similarly, groundnut plants do have fakes by their sides which appear exactly like groundnut plants. Even their flowers appear same as groundnut's flowers - in size, color and shape.

Harvested green peas do have small clay clots amidst them which are exactly in the size of green peas. We can't see how they are formed and mixed up with the original green peas. I saw a plant with leaves that appear as drumstick leaves. The beauty is, it grew near the original drumstick tree. This fake doesn't grow near any other tree. It knows where to grow so that others might be fooled of its appearance.

Nature teaches us to be aware of fakes through trial and error method.

In fact, fakes try to fool us in many ways in every walk of life. There are fake businesses, fake relationships, fake happiness and so on.

Sometimes, there are more than one fake for an object which is very worthy or priceless. There are many fakes

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for the living being. Physical body, mind, ego – these all are fakes to the Self or Being. We think that we are the gross body, we think that we are the mind, we think that we have a beginning and an end.

There is only one way to rule the fake things – hold the real, don't lose the hold at any cost. What is the real? It is the Eternal Blissful Consciousness – Sachidhananda. How to hold It? Through Bakthi (devotion) and Gnana (Wisdom).

Two in One

In the first work 'Need of the hour', I had been trying to say something for Father and Mother. It is indeed the very same drive that made me write again and again. Father – Mother, Spirit – Nature, Conscience – Common sense, Sathya – Dharma, Siva – Sakthi, Wisdom – Love. All these pairs imbibe the same core. When the former is known, the later is at your disposal. In other words, when you find Father, you are the Darling of Mother as well. If you experience the Spirit, Nature is at your dominance. If you are controlled by your conscience, your common sense would also speak in the same tune. If you trust Sathya – which is to protect your own self esteem - your image as a son of God, the internal Self, then you would hold Dharma too – which is to support the smooth functioning of the external Self. *Siva* is the ever existing Potent; *Sakthi*, the ever conscious *Chit*. The pair is an indivisible One. The *Ardha Nareeswara Roopa* symbolizes this. There is only One. The soul applies wisdom (through meditation) and love (through devotion) in various degrees to perceive the One. Wisdom and Love are the two eyes that produce the picture as One. The result of Wisdom is Love and the effect of Love is the experience based Wisdom of the Self.

In an ideal Hindu temple we have the image of the Father, the image of the Mother and the image of a creature - *vahana* focusing the Father or Mother. Father

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represents the Unmanifest God; the Mother represents the Divine Nature. The *vahana* represents the soul. Not only humans - all creatures in His creation are His children. That's why we have different *vahanas* in temples to exhibit the Godliness of all living beings. And the *Puranas* and *Agamas* give much more meaning to this.

When the goal is reached, when the candidate gets through, there would not be three or two, but Only One. This is the knowledge to be taught to the young students and elders, that they are the children of the One, having the qualities of the One, marching on the royal path towards the One - to become the One.

Let us try to make a better self and thus a better universe!

The Moral Tablet – Upanishad Quotes

Here I would like to say something more about the moral tablet. It's a card like study material that holds a picture of a yogi sitting with the background image of Thiruvannamalai; this card carries the heading 'God is in our land'. On the face of this picture three Upanishad quotes (explained in 'God is in our land' in detail) are given. In addition to this, five morals (explained in 'Thus spake India' in detail) are given separately with the background image of Thirumalai in the other side of the card. This is the moral tablet. Many of us don't have time and desire to seek the truth. In such a case, even one swallows this moral tablet half mindedly – still it will do its job. This nation needs this tablet – very badly.

Let us go deep into the purport of this tablet.

The phrase 'God is in our land' points out the divinity that lies within everyone. The 'land' here refers to the dominion of the 'being' – it (the word 'land') doesn't refer to any geographical area. This 'land' is common to all beings across all nations.

What this picture depicts is: The light set ablaze in the top of Thiruvannamalai is related to the lights seen in the yogi. The external worship is to help one have the inner vision. The goal of human life is to develop this inner

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vision by all means. To see this light, the eye of Gnana (wisdom) or/and the eye of Prema (love) is/are required.

Coming to the Upanishad part i.e to the point of Truth, the first quote is taken from Ishopanishad. It tries to answer the question ‘where is God?’ “The entire universe belongs to God. He lives in every smallest bit of it.”

Truth or God is everywhere, all pervasive. There is not even an atom without His presence. One should not think that God is present in only a few places. Of course, His presence can be felt more vividly in certain places and beings. Still, he can be found anywhere. He is right in front of you, behind you, beside you, above you, below you and also inside you.

The falsehood too is nothing but a kind of reflection or shadow of the Truth. If there is no object, there won't be any shadow. If there is no ‘Truth’, there won't be any ‘falsehood’. All that we need to do is to identify/realise the Truth. Then we can move the shadow as per our will i.e. as per the will of the Truth. Else we will be taken away by the shadow of delusion. The Truth is referred in many terms as Omniscient, Omni Potent, God, The Supreme Soul and Brahman. The Truth is often referred as ‘It’ in Upanishads. And it is simply everywhere, which means it is inside us too. We can put it this way also, we are inside the Omnipresent Truth. As per the will of God, falsehood too accompanies us. The world seems to expose both real and unreal things. And it is only the real or the Truth that renders unwavering peace, freedom and happiness to us. We had been given freedom and free will

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to direct our thoughts and actions. If we are aware of our true nature, i.e, as a spark of the Truth, then we will be ruling our thoughts and actions. If we are not aware of our true nature, the delusion and the effects of our past actions will be ruling ourselves. This 'slavery' can be changed to 'freedom' at any given point of time, when an aspirant longs for freedom from the depth of his/her soul. It is for such an aspirant that this Upanishad quote renders the declaration that God is everywhere and is ever with us.

Then why we ordinary people are not able to see/feel Him?

We need to tune ourselves to the wave length of the Divine/Truth.

Brahmopanishad says, "God can be seen either through the eye of love or through the eye of wisdom." This is the second Upanishad quote in this moral tablet.

'Wisdom that differentiates the real and the unreal' and 'the love for the real' are the 'eyes' which can show us God or the Truth. They are referred as 'eyes', because, they are within everyone. We don't need to borrow eyes from others. We just need to use our own eyes. This wisdom and love are within everyone. Either one is enough to see God. The wisdom based experience of the reality leads to love for the reality. The love for the reality grants the wisdom that drives away the blind attachment of the falsehood. The one, who sees through the eye of wisdom or love, loses one's ego.

Those who are immersed deep in the Truth see the Truth element even amidst the darkness or Maya. Once the vision of the Truth is bestowed, the Gnani or the devotee will be seeing the Brahman everywhere. He would realize that the Truth is not different or distinct to him. The object that sees and the object that is seen are one and the same. The empty space inside the pot and the space outside it are one and the same. The space inside the pot is Atman (soul); the space that is spread out every where is Brahman (God). Only the name changes; the Thing is the same. The successful spiritual aspirant who uses the eye of wisdom or the eye of love (or both) realizes that the Truth he is searching for is right inside and that It is not distinct from the Truth that prevails everywhere. He declares “Aham Brahmasmi” – “I am Brahman” which means ‘Self is the Infinite Reality’. This is the maha vakya of Brahadaranyaka Upanishad. This got to be the third Upanishad quote in the moral tablet. This is the ultimate realization. Everyone is essentially divine. God is not in someone else’s land; He is in our own land – within each one’s Self as the infinite reality. Upon realizing this ultimate truth, all else becomes unreal or of lower significance. Will one suffer for the wounds that one got in one’s dreams, AFTER waking up? No. Such is the state of those who know the Self as the Eternal Blissful Consciousness. The body, mind and other forms of temporary existence lose their importance. The one, who uses the eye of love or wisdom (or both), as said in the second Upanishad quote, gets the vision of the Self. The vision of the Self is the vision of God. Such realized

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beings feel God in every particle of creation – including their own being, as said in the first Upanishad quote.

‘Truth is everywhere. It can be realized through either wisdom or love (or both). Let us recognize and entice the boundless Truth element that indwells in all of us.’ This is the juice of the above three Upanishad quotes. It can be made possible through Self/God realization.

The Moral Tablet – Cultural Values

Cultural values given in the moral tablet:

Strive to feel Godliness

God realization is given utmost importance in the Hindu culture. Seek God either through Gnana or Bakthi. Every Hindu home has a separate room for performing spiritual sadhana. Prayers and meditation are done in that Pooja room. God is sought not only in temples outside – but also in temples in homes and in temples of the hearts. Every individual is triggered to devote time everyday for realizing the Truth. Even those who do not believe the word ‘God’ nevertheless searched for their ‘Truth’. Thus Self realization or God realization is the very base of Indian culture.

Don't hurt living beings

The realized beings say that God dwells in all beings. So, we shouldn't hurt living beings (including ourselves) mentally, verbally or physically. In fact, we should take others' burden as our own. That's why, in her golden era, India housed many dharmasalas offering free food, shelter and medicine to the needy people.

Live in harmony with nature

Nature is worshipped as Divine Mother in Hindu culture. Balanced nature is essential for all beings to survive. In

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the Vedhic culture, rituals are done to balance the natural sources. Water sources and forests were protected. Environment was honored. Now we have a different scene. We are losing water sources due to extreme pollution and extreme exploitation. The area of forests is shrinking daily. The smokes and other pollution are increasing daily. So the earth got heated up and all beings are living in danger. We need to lead a harmonious life with nature. This is need of the hour.

Revere your parents

In Hindu culture, family values are highly respected. Parents are respected rather worshipped by their children. Devotion starts here.

Live to the rule of 'one man is to one woman'

Man and woman are matched by elders through thorough scrutiny and the couple lives harmonious life with mutual understanding and help. The man preferred to play social roles and the woman preferred to play family roles. Still there had been righteous freedom for both types of gender in choosing their attitude. There had been famous male cooks and famous female warriors and poets. Once married, the couple lives together all through their life. The sense control and discipline which are the fundamental requisites for spiritual development are practiced in one's marital life also.

The realization of the truth about the Self and the ability to abide by the high cultural values would become

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possible only when one establishes good morals within one self. The basic morals are Purity in thoughts, Unity in thoughts, words and actions (Stability), Truthfulness in one's stability, Unselfish love as the base and Self Introspection. These morals are also printed in the moral tablet.

India's religions and culture aim at realization of the Supreme within and without. This moral tablet can be consumed by all who want to feel God in their land.

Who is Hindu?

“The term ‘Hindu’ in Sanskrit refers to the one who suffers for the pain of others”.

This is an Upanishad quote (“Himsaayam Thooyathe yasa: sa: Hindhuri Thyabitheeyathe”) found in one of the works of Swami Krupananda Vaariyar (Tamil book: aalayam ean?) that details Hindu worship.

I would like to replace the word ‘Hindu’ with the word ‘religionist’. This is the common definition for a religionist of any religion. During the times of Vedhas and Upanishads, there was only one broad religion. It has diversified branches of philosophies such as Sankhya, Dharga, Mimamsa and so on. Even atheists had a place of stand under the vast tree. They too had their own reasoning to say that there is no God or soul. Whether their reasoning was right or wrong is secondary. They had the freedom to present their ideas. So in those days, the question was not whether one had belief in God; the question was what system of thought one followed in solving the mystery of life. There were only two types of people. i) those who followed a religion, ii) those who did not follow any specific system of thought. If one follows any specific system of Hinduism, all that he needs to prove to himself is that he suffers when the souls around him suffer; if he does, then he is a Hindu, a religionist.

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The above Upanishad quote of Vaariyar goes to those who follow a religion, the Hindu; in effect, it fits all religious people in the world. As per this definition, if one has belief in God but has no heart for other living beings, then he is not a religionist. If one doesn't have faith in God, but has natural compassion towards all living beings, then he is very much a religionist.

Let us go deep into the purport of this quote. If one suffers for the pains of others, it means he has gone beyond the limitations of limited body consciousness. He just doesn't 'pity' for others – he 'suffers' for others. Such a state of experience will come only when one is aware of the boundless, inexplicable state of one's own being which alone stands across all manifestations. This is the indication of a true spiritual man. This is what this Upanishad quote wants us to mean.

A question may arise here. A religionist feels the pain of others. Is that for what all religions are made for? A religionist feels the pain of the world. He begins to find the mystery behind the painful world. As he progresses, he also finds the way to stay away from those pains. He even helps the deserving people to escape the deluding painful world. He stands one with all; he stands in and beyond all limiting factors and multitude diversities. This is the ultimate result of realization.

The ancient religion of India is not a religion of dogmatism but the store of practical pathways and the

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individuals had the freedom to choose his/her own way of life.

No politics and prejudices here. I am just telling the definition of the word 'religionist' through a Upanishad text of Hinduism. The one who takes the pains of others as one's own is a religionist – let him be of any origin and nationality.

Why Thiruvannamalai and Thirumalai?

In the moral tablet, we have the images of two auspicious places. One is Thiruvannamalai; the other is Thirumalai. The spiritual significance of Thiruvannamalai is already explained in the book 'God is in our land'. Thiruvannamalai is more of a universal hub of Truth seekers. We can see here foreign nationals too. But in Thirumalai, we can't see any foreigner. It's more of a domestic pilgrimage center and is more religious and equally social.

In Thiruvannamalai (generally, in all Shiva temples), the devotees, primarily seek spiritual development; they won't ask for material wealth and pleasures. But in Thirumalai (generally, in all Vishnu temples), devotees ask for material development primarily. Still, there are people who ask for worldly wealth in the temple of Thiruvannamalai; there are people who plead for self realization at the foot of Lord Balaji in Thirumalai. These spiritual centers can give one any type of development one asks for, of course when it is asked from the depth of one's heart.

But, Thiruvannamalai is known for rendering spiritual aggrandizement to the living beings and Thirumalai is known for rendering remarkable social development. These two are inter-related and stand as two sides of the

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coin. When one is bloomed in self realization, one would feel the living presence of all beings. So, he would feel the urge of serving all beings in the society and outside the society. Similarly, when one functions with material goals and service, one would come to know about the spiritual force that gives him power and drives him to the desired goals. Without the awareness of one's own spiritual identity, one's material actions may render results either way – to the good or bad of the society. The cultural values of India do not prescribe these 'blind', 'adamant' material actions.

One shouldn't try to achieve at the cost of immorality. There need to be some discipline in one's social play. Knowing one's true identity is the very base element in the Indian culture and society. The ancient Indian culture taught this from one's primary level of education. That's why, 'Strive to feel Godliness' comes as the first religious cultural value, in the face of Thirumalai.

When one feels one's true identity (as a spark of God), through the way of wisdom or love, then he would feel Self or God everywhere. He would want other fellow beings to emerge in their conscious levels. He would take the sufferings of his fellow beings as his own. With this awakening, he would be serving the world either concretely or abstractly. This awakening would drive one to serve the society either visibly or otherwise.

Thus, self realization and service become two sides of the same coin. Only when you pay something, you are

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rewarded with the coin. The 'pay' here refers to the basic morals to be followed: Purity, Unity, Truthfulness, Love, Introspection. These morals are required in both the cases - to imbibe your self realization and to express your goodwill to the society. And I do have another personal reason to bring the pictures of Thiruvannamalai and Thirumalai on the faces of moral tablet. Sri Paramahansa Yogananda had visited both these sacred places in his tour of south India. I too happen to visit these sacred places whenever time permits me. I feel that Yoganandaji's foot prints worked on this layman to excel his idea of India and to remind one of the basic morals to be followed while working out one's personal and social roles.

Sachidhanandha : Existence - knowledge - Bliss

Here is a layman's interpretation for the vedhic term '*Sachidhananda*'.

Let us take the first term 'Sath'. Everyone exists. I exist, you exist and everything we see exists. But how long? Do we exist forever? Whatever we see exist for some time and then vanish away in the mystic ocean of uncertainty. We can't give any assurance that all the mountains, rivers and the nations would stay in the same spot after a million years. To say even more, we can't even assure that the planet earth would stay forever. Existence is of two types. 1. Permanent existence 2. Impermanent existence. We are feeling our impermanent existence. Existence, here means the existence of the reality. The thing that never loses its existence - that never gets destroyed by the course of time or by the force of falsehood. This alone has the permanent existence.

Only when we find that thing, we get perfect existence. Till then, we come and go as bubbles. What is that thing? What is in us that exists for ever? It is the Spirit. All else are changing. The body and mind that we usually think of ourselves are impermanent and are subject to changes and decay. It is the Spirit that stands for ever. It is the only thing that exists for ever. All those things which change

or get destroyed are unreal. The reality or the Truth is something that stands undisturbed by time and materials. Only when we relate our existence with our Spirit i.e the True thing of what we are, only then we get "Existence". This eternal existence of the Truth is referred in our scriptures as "Sath".

Let us see the second term - Knowledge. It refers to the knowledge of our existence. Assume that a stone is blessed to exist for ever. What is the use of its existence, if it doesn't have the knowledge of its existence? So, the knowledge of our existence is the other basic requirement. First of all we must know that we do exist! This term is related with our consciousness. The body bound consciousness, the mind bound consciousness and the spiritual consciousness. When we acquire the spiritual consciousness, we satisfy the second basic quality "Knowledge of Existence". It is referred as "Chit" in our scriptures.

Assume that a man knows himself as the spirit. He gets the consciousness of the spirit. But if he doesn't find happiness for his existence and for the knowledge of his existence, then what is the use? If he says, "Let me die, I don't want to live", then what is the use of 'Sath' and Chith. (For those who have found the 'Sath' and 'Chith', such a miserable thing will not happen. I am putting this question just for clarification). So, the third quality "Bliss" follows the first two terms. Man exists consciously as spirit - only to be happy. It is not an ordinary pleasure that he used to get in his impermanent

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existence. Being happy is his very nature and he doesn't need anything to be happy. Thus the ever new joy or "Anandha" as referred in Hindu scriptures is the third basic quality that every human seeks. These three are inseparable one.

God is in the form of these three qualities "Eternal Existence", "Eternal Consciousness" and "Eternal Bliss" - "*Sath*", "*Chith*", "*Anandha*" - *Sachidhananda*. As the Universal Father, He has left a spark of Him in every soul of His creation. As the children of God, humans too deserve these qualities of *Sath*, *Chith* and *Anandha*.

Thuria

In one of my profile photos, I encrypted the following words: Speech is silvern, silence is golden, sleep is platinum.

These events are prescribed to those who are tired and to those who require some refreshment. Needless to say, speech here means calm and encouraging utterance of words or gestures. I didn't mean any chaos or heartbreaking beats here.

Silence, by its very definition, means calmness. It is not just absence of speech but also of other senses. It would be very refreshing and blissful, though it is a bit hard to do. Actually, there is no sort of any 'doing' here. That's why it is a bit, for many, a lot, difficult! We all are accustomed to do something, let it be good or bad, during most of our life time. We are always engaged. Even in sleep, we do lot of things, in fact, many times greater than those who do during our waking state. Our mind is ever active.

Only during deep sleep we get better refreshment. Sleep, here means the state of deep sleep where we don't get/generate any dreams. This is a superior state of silence, where we get peace in abundance. This is the state of consciousness that prevails after Swapna (dream) and it is called the state of Sushupti. These are the mental states that all human beings, even animals, experience.

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The waking state (Jagrat), dreaming state (Swapna) and deep sleeping state (Sushupti) – these are common to all.

There is one more thing that works for dedicated humans who undertake spiritual sadhana. Those who seek perfect peace try to achieve this state. Those who are tired of being fettered into the other three states of consciousness – life after life – seek this pure and complete consciousness. This is the state of Thuria – the mindless state.

This is not waking state; this is not dreaming state; this is not deep sleeping state. This is just a witness of all other states of consciousness. This is not affected by the experiences of the other three states of consciousness. Those who go into Thuria state, see the reality, taste the reality and become one with the reality. Perfect peace or Bliss is derived in the state of Thuria. There is no doer here. There is no second thing here. It's all The One all the way. In yogic terms, this is referred as Samadhi.

Some scholars say that there are some more states of consciousness like 'Thuria adheetham' and 'Anandha Thuriam'. All these advanced conscious levels are only the state of Thuria in various depths, as we can see the term 'Thuria' in these terms ('Thuriadheetham' and 'Anandha Thuriam'). The literal meaning of the word 'Thuria' itself is 'the fourth'. Chandogya Upanishad says that there are only four types of consciousness. Mandokya Upanishad declares that the state of Thuria as the ultimate state of realisation.

Spirituality

A friend in my office read an essay of me and wondered what could be the reason for the deep study in the subject. I told him that it was spirituality. He exclaimed, “You are spiritual man, huh?!” A thin line of difference, an invisible veil between a spiritual man and a normal man, was inherent in my friend’s exclamation.

Many people think that a spiritual man is essentially different from a material man. They make their own guess works and add colors to the spiritual man. In their view, a spiritual man should go to a forest, renounce everything, be truthful and remain unattached. Half of this is true. One can be truthful and unattached even without renunciation. And they also say that a ‘material’ man is of the type who enjoys everything without any limitations, while a ‘spiritual’ man suffers a lot. Spiritual or material, it is happiness that one seeks. The former assures one, lasting happiness and the later gives temporary joy followed by restlessness and lack of peace.

Materiality and all other aspects are only a part of spirituality. The difference arises when one forgets the wholeness of one’s existence. When one doesn’t recognize one’s spirit, he uses to think that he is different from a spiritual man.

It is the same man who appears spiritual or material. The thing is the same, there is no two. And the thing is spirit.

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There is no other equaling reality. Spirituality is the complete whole that comprises even the faces of materiality. Nothing is away from it.

One may ignore the material wealth and still be happy. But, every one of us is in need of spiritual wealth to ensure a happy material life. These two aspects need not go against each other. The spiritual man need not renounce the material wealth and the material man cannot ignore the moral wealth. We just can't do that. Can anyone imagine acquiring money through unfair means and lead a happy spiritual life as well? Even having all the wealth of the world through right means, can one be sure of one's happiness?

We can see lots of people who have wealth to the brim, but without peace and happiness. So, we need moral strength, the spiritual consciousness to enjoy what we have. I didn't renounce anything. I didn't renounce my material education, I didn't renounce my friends and relatives, I didn't renounce my family life, I didn't give up money making. I cannot renounce the spiritual aspects also.

The spirituality lays down two basic rules: 1. Righteousness. It expects everyone to be righteous in their thoughts, speech and actions. 2. Non-attachment. If one could remain unattached to one's ego, then the causes of worries and fears get burnt in the virtue of non-attachment.

Thus, there is no need to differentiate between spirituality and materiality. Nothing can stay away from the view of spirituality. To the one who recognizes his spirit, there is no difference between spirituality and other things. For the one who doesn't recognize his spirituality, there seem a thousand differences which we generally call 'delusion'. Reading or writing on spirituality will not make one spiritual unless he keeps on trying to hold the morals of the spirit.

Many persons think that one can enjoy all sorts of worldly matter in whatever manner they wish and can suddenly become spiritual the next day! It is not so. To become spiritual, to know one's wholeness, one has to start one's preparation from one's childhood itself. 'Being Spiritual' doesn't imply 'not being material'. Being spiritual implies the ability of being anything and everything!

An independence day

It was the 65th independence day of India. A national channel was telecasting a program to check the sense of patriotism among the youth. The host had a set of books that contained Gandhiji's autobiography, Bharathiar's poems and such other works concerning Indian history. The host said that he would deliver the books to those who give the correct answers to his basic questions regarding India's history during freedom struggle.

The host asked a few questions like what is the full name of Gandhi, what is the name of the national poet, what is the full name of Bharathiar, what is the name of Nethaji's army . To everyone's surprise, most of the educated youth said that they didn't know the answer. The host said that there were 'educated' youth who didn't know even the name of the father of their nation.

He returned with almost all the books undelivered. He concluded the program sadly. He said, "These guys might know the history of their film heroes, their dates of birth, the place of birth, etc. When asked about the history of India's independence, they had nothing to say. When asked to say a few lines of Bharathiar's poems, the patriotic poet, they struggled. If I asked them to hum film songs, they might have won these books. For them, independence day is a day of celebration – but what for they are celebrating?"

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Well, the full name of Gandhi is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, name of our national poet is Rabindranath Tagore, the full name of Bharathiar is Subramanya Bharathi, the name of Nethaji's army is Indian National Army.

Still, I have something more to say. All these personalities have many things in common – they all wanted independent India. They all wanted to reform India. They all boldly put forth their ideas and tried to give a shape to them in their ways. They renounced many things in life for the sake of their philosophy and the people. I have one more common thing to say. They all had read Bhagavat Gita in full. They all had faith in God. They all were doing spiritual sadhana amidst all mess. We all know about the devotion of Gandhi, Tagore and Bharathi. But, only a few know about the spiritual quiver of Nethaji. He had taken Kriya Yoga Dhiksha on 12/6/1939 in Varanasi. The interesting fact is the same yoga Dhiksha was given to Gandhiji as well, on 27/8/1935 in Wardha. Though, they had differences in their ideologies, they had common things in their souls. Besides working for an independent India, they were working for their freedom as well – for the freedom of their souls.

India wants to give this sort of freedom to everyone. This is the true freedom.

The present youth are not bothered either about India's freedom or about their own freedom. The media and all

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educational institutions are responsible for having developed this sad and dangerous trend. The media gives more importance to the entertainment than to the development of ideal morale youth. The educational institutions do not give the required attention to the matters concerning patriotism, nation's culture and individuality. These people are busy in bringing a western way of life amidst the misguided youth. This issue was dealt in detail in 'Need of the hour'.

The message and me

A friend asked having seen ‘God is in our land’ words and the domain address pasted in my car: “What are you trying to say through this?”

I came straight to the point. “I mean to say that God is in everyone – the land here means each and every being.”

My friend asked: “What do you mean by God? What is your definition for God?”

I referred to the scriptures: “God is the Eternal Blissful Consciousness that resides in all of us. As the children of God we too have this quality.”

He asked: “Do you mean to say that God is not there in inanimate things, (pointing to a nearby fridge) say like this fridge?”

I said, “He is everywhere. The whole creation belongs to Him, there is not even an atom without His presence.”

He asked: “How can you prove that God is in inanimate things?”

I replied: “Once Pondicherry Mother happened to visit an office suddenly. In order to make the office look neat, the office workers dumped all the books in a bureau and closed it. Mother while entering their office, asked ‘I could hear someone weeping here. Who is weeping

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inside?’ The workers said there was no one inside. Mother asked them to keep quiet. She went in a particular direction and came near to the bureau where the books were dumped in an awkward way. She asked the workers to open it. When they did it, the books fell down. Mother said, ‘It is these books that are weeping.’ All the workers were astonished and came to know that inanimate things too have a state of consciousness which can be felt only through a realized Being like Mother.”

My friend continued: “Well God is everywhere. What is the need to spread that message?”

My reply: “Even though we have the Godly nature, we are away from our nature and mess up with so many things. We had forgotten our real nature and are looking for peace and happiness outside. To remind the people that we are indeed a spark of God, I had been employed to spread this message. Those who are attracted by this message would get in to my web site and would get an opportunity to refine their nature. Even a glimpse of the message will bestow a relief at least for a while. I do this work not on my own. This is not something new. This has been said millenniums ago through simple phrases like ‘*Aham Brahmasmi*’. Spreading this message is the work given to me by God. It’s my duty. I just got to be an instrument in the hands of God.”

My friend asked, “Do you mean to say that you are the blessed one who is sent to spread this message? Are you a realized being?”

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I said, “No, I am just a layman.”

My friend asked, “Then how can you do the job of God?”

I replied, “God only knows. You ask Him directly, you may get the answer.”

A Commandment

I happened to see the views of some Christian friends against – strongly against – idolatry in Hinduism. They quote the Ten Commandments as the authority for their belief against idolatry. They quote one of the ten commandments:

“You shall not make for yourself an idol” is an abbreviated form of one of the Ten Commandments.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.”

The interesting fact is it is Christians who worship images MORE than any other religious group. When I looked for the images of Jesus Christ, the number of images that I got was several hundred times more than any other God or Spiritual Master of any other religion or group. If they really want to stand against idolatry, they should have shunned the images of their God in all ways, but they rank FIRST in keeping them! I don't see anything wrong in that, anyway.

They may argue that God only ‘opposes’ graven images – not the electronic ones. The commandment says ‘any likeness of anything’ – it includes electronic and all other formats.

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They may argue that they take only the images of their Godly man not God. This is what everyone does. The difference is we don't see much difference between God and Godly men for Godly men know themselves as Spirit – as a part of God; they prove by their words and actions that they are Godly in nature – not a bundle of flesh and bones stuffed with cheap desires. Anything that reminds us of our ultimatum, either through the images of Godly men or through any other symbols that make us think of God, is o.k. for God, He is not against worshipping such images. It could be a Shiva linga, a cross or an image of Goddess, a crescent – if we see them in religious point of view, we are reminded of God. (These symbols are not compulsory in Hinduism, anyway.)

Then, what about the Commandment of God that strongly opposes idolatry? I am not here to stand for or against idolatry. I just want to clarify that God is not against image worship. Here comes the real meaning of the Commandment.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.”

‘Unto thee’ means for thee, in the likeness of thee. (thee, meaning ‘you’, here refers to common, unrealized humans, as God is referring to common humans in this occasion; The commandment says ‘unto you’ not ‘unto Me’.) He gave commandments to the common people – not to the Godly men or women or to Himself.

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God commands us, the humans, not to make any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth FOR HUMANS. “You should not make, FOR YOURSELF, any graven image...” Humans should not worship other mortal humans. This is the actual meaning of this commandment.

He warns us not to make any image to exhibit the limited, partial attributes of us – the humans, as it was quiet common in those days, particularly in Egypt, to make big monuments for humans. (It should be noted that God gave these commandments to Moses in Mount Sinai, near Egypt.) Not only in Egypt, in other nations also, the ordinary humans who were strong socially or otherwise, were worshipped as Gods in those days. It is very common to see the statues and images of eminent personalities, poets, kings and such other socially dominant personalities in Egypt, in India and in all corners of the world. This practice is followed even to the present times. Politicians and such other socially powerful personalities influence other humans to make statues and drawings to depict their own physical images. It may be hard to believe, in India, we have ‘temples’ for some actresses and sportsmen! Thus, ordinary humans treat themselves as heavenly ‘gods’ which they don’t deserve at all. It is for these people that the commandment goes (all commandments are for ordinary immature humans). “You shall not make for yourself any graven image, or any likeness *of anything that is in*

heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.”

Such images are not made out of love or respect but of fear or other egoistical reasons. That’s why God warns against worshipping the images of ‘bodies’. The image worshipping of ordinary humans keeps reminding us of our bodily and mental attributes. We don’t see them as Spirit or God – but as bonded beings. This would keep us away from our true nature. Instead, if we see the images of Godly men, we see them as the personifications of God – with the nature of God. We see them as self – realized, not as bonded beings. This reminds us of our true nature and of our ultimate goal.

Although Jesus discussed the Ten Commandments in the Sermon on the Mount, he did not speak directly of issues regarding the meaning of the commandment against idolatry. However, according to the gospels, Jesus did say the greatest commandment was to “love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.”

So, it is clear that neither God nor Jesus Christ stand against idolatry. If idols or images help some (they really do) to love God with all their heart, soul and mind, then there is nothing wrong in that.

Now a days, not only politicians or sports persons, all ordinary people, want to showcase their images. This is quiet common in developing democratic nations, particularly in India. The common people place big

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displays in common places and show their faces through them to others, for sharing joy or sorrow. The common people are forced to glance through such images. Humans should not try to glorify their own images, for whatever reason. This is the purport of this command.

There could be image worship for God or Godly men – but not for the dyeing or died humans. The noble spiritual masters of India had showered their Grace through their images. God too had responded to His sincere devotees through His images. (Ref: Autobiography of a Yogi). We had also heard of many instances of The Cross, saving lives.

But, even Godly men like Vallalar and Lahiri Mahashaya refused to give their images for latter worship. As they prefer only their spiritual identity. If the thing is so, we, ordinary humans, should never try to popularize our images. It would add only fuel to our ego – our false identity with body.

God doesn't oppose the making of images that remind Himself. If He does, He wouldn't have accepted worshipping Crosses and Crescents. What He asks us is not to make our own images in any form as it bears adverse effects in the process of our true progress – the spiritual evolution.

What is Bliss?

We all think that happiness is something which is derived. The truth is happiness is our very nature. We think that we need to do something to get or derive happiness. The truth is the true happiness is felt in the depth of silence.

To feel the real happiness, which is our own nature, we all employ ourselves in some activities. Material activities bind us with good or bad results. The spiritual activities (sadhana) help us to realize what our true nature is. It leads to the undisturbed bliss, for unwavering bliss is our very nature. Thus, sadhanas don't 'give' us happiness directly. They simply help us to realize our true identity.

Once the true identity is felt, there is no need for any sadhana. There will not be any activity. There will be only silence. In the depth of this silence, one feels bliss. Or to say even clearer, the soul peace itself is bliss.

When we say silence or peace, it doesn't refer to any passive state; it doesn't refer to boredom. It's a state of consciousness that is ever vibrant and equally stable and pleasant.

The realized beings that dwell in this state, do not perform any activity. If at all they perform action, it will be for awakening this peace in the world. Since they are

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anchored in their true nature, they will not be disturbed by anything what so ever. Nothing can bind or suppress them.

Thus, the bliss rendering peace is the end of all souls. That's why, in India, all religious ceremonies are closed, by uttering the words 'Om Santhi (Peace), Santhi (Peace), Santhi (Peace)'.

Reincarnation

It is not a belief – but a proven truth for Indians. In fact, many other people with different national and religious back grounds do accept ‘reincarnation’.

If we see this concept logically, we will find the truth behind it. The acceptance of ‘reincarnation’ does plenty of good things in the mindset of its believers, the important two, being: those who believe that incarnation does happen, take the unreasonable hardships of life easily, owing to the factor that they are harvesting the effects of the bad seeds sowed by them in some of their past lives. The unpaid hard workers console themselves owing to the factor that they will reap the benefits of their good deeds in some of their other lives.

The wise one who is aware of one’s multiple births and deaths longs for a way out of this hazardous birth – death cycle that prompts him/her for self realization. This inevitably accepts the doctrine of cause and effect. Till we have nil balance in our karma account, tasting births and deaths is inescapable. The spirituality is all about having that ‘nil’ balance. Some humans try to achieve it through logical means; some people through emotional means.

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The acceptance of karma based reincarnation induces one to live a life which is farther to the problematic material world and closer to the more peaceful inner being.

Now let us see it from the point of evidential truths. Does soul reincarnate? Science might not have a lab to test and disclose the facts regarding reincarnation of the soul. But sages do have - those who have dedicated their full life for self realization do have. Through the inborn microscope of Wisdom, they could see one's past life and future life. Sometimes, even a few ignorant people get the remembrance of their past lives in the play of delusion. There are many books with case studies and examples to prove the reincarnation factor. To say for example, 'Children's Past Lives: How Past Life Memories Affect Your Child', by Carol Bowman and 'Journey of Souls: Case Studies of Life Between Lives', by Michael Duff Newton.

Some Indian spiritual seers had talked about their past lives and also sometimes about their future lives. Generally, the enlighten beings wouldn't have rebirth. Still, a few of them choose to come again in human garb to help the suffering world.

Sri ParamahansaYogananda had talked about his past lives (and also about the past lives of some other personalities who lived during his life time). Sri Sathya Sai Baba had talked about his past and future lives.

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Almost all religions that have their roots in India - Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and of course Hinduism accept reincarnation. The acceptance of one's multiple lives based on cause and effect widens one's scope of knowledge, experience and self realization.

The conclusion

I didn't want to place myself on the stage. But I wanted to take these works to the stage – to the society.

My own family members, except my mother, do not have time to read my writings. My mother appreciated and encouraged me even without reading my books! She doesn't need to – she knows what is inside. Even my wife is not prepared to read my books. Of course, she is not well versed in English, still she hadn't read my Tamil version of 'God is in our land' till date, for her own reasons. I didn't compel her (or any one!) to read my books. She might have thought that if she happened to read my books, it could bring a gap in our casual relationship. I too just make use of her attitude! Some friends, after reading these books, had nothing to say. The language could be a barrier.

I also could see the intention of a few friends with regard to these writings. Either they want to make money or gain undue popularity by riding on my shoulders. God would prefer these works to remain unnoticed rather to get caught in the hands of vainglorious and money minded people. At right time, these works will reach the right people – as per the will of God.

I don't think that these works are for Hindus (I mean, in social point of view – actually the term Hindu applies to all who feel for everyone) alone. They are for all sincere

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seekers of the Truth, they may hold different philosophies – but what they seek is one and the same (accepting the plurality is the base of Hinduism – *Ekam Sath Vipraha Bahudha Vadanti*). It is not wrong in following a different proven path, but one has to be sincere in it and has to be tolerant towards other proven paths.

The condition of this nation is also something similar to that of mine. Her proven tenets and spiritual background remain unnoticed by her common residents. For several centuries, she was in wrong hands. The intruders in the past tried to exploit her material wealth and to destroy her vital strength. The present administrators too are doing the same thing as they couldn't bring the right education to ensure moral living and they do not restrict the media that spread vulgarity.

Still, a few foreign nations appreciate India's spiritual findings. How many of the Indians know that the Gayatri Mantra is broadcasted daily for 15 minutes from 7 p.m. onwards over Radio Paramaribo, Surinam, South America for the past few years (from 2011 onwards), and in Amsterdam and Holland from the end of 2012 onwards? They know its value scientifically. They know the universality of India's findings. But the people in India do not bother to know about their spiritual findings. Secularism and spirituality is wrongly educated in India.

Materialism is widespread. All the technologies work for material developments and comforts. The technological

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approach without ethical background will lead the nation to disaster.

Because of this, the people here in the 21st century are highly corrupted; there is no human ethics in government offices, business organizations, educational institutions, political parties and even among religious groups. I can write a huge volume on that – but it's not my role. I am here to point out the essence of the religion and the vitality of this nation. By God's grace and will, I believe I was able to do it with ethics.

I don't want to close this work with negative notes.

I can see that still there are persons who weigh morality and lead life accordingly. India and I do not bother about the numbers. It's enough if these works, her spiritual treasures get recognized by those for whom they are meant for. I hope and am sure it will happen as per God's plan.

May peace dwell in all hearts.

My India - Poem by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

Not where the musk of happiness blows,
Not where darkness and fears never tread;
Not in the homes of perpetual smiles,
Nor in the heaven of a land of prosperity
Would I be born
If I must put on mortal garb once more.
Dread famine may prowl and tear my flesh,
Yet would I love to be again
In my Hindustan.
A million thieves of disease
May try to steal the body's fleeting health;
And clouds of fate
May shower scalding drops of searing sorrow –
Yet would I there, in India,
Love to reappear!
Is this love of mine blind sentiment
That sees not the pathways of reason?
Ah, no! I love India,
For there I learned first to love God
and all things beautiful.
Some teach to seize the fickle dewdrop, life,
Sliding down the lotus leaf of time;
Stubborn hopes are built
Around the gilded, brittle body-bubble.
But India taught me to love

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The soul of deathless beauty in the dewdrop
and the bubble –
Not their fragile frames.
Her sages taught me to find my Self,
Buried beneath the ash heaps
Of incarnations of ignorance.
Though many a land of power, plenty, and science
My soul, garbed sometimes as an Oriental,
Sometimes as an Occidental,
Travelled far and wide,
Seeking Itself;
At last, in India, to find Itself.
Though mortal fires raze all her homes
and golden paddy fields,
Yet to sleep on her ashes and dream immortality,
O India, I will be there!
The guns of science and matter
Have boomed on her shores
Yet she is unconquered.
Her soul is free evermore!
Her soldier saints are away,
To rout with realization's ray
The bandits of hate, prejudice, and patriotic selfishness;
And to burn the walls of separation dark
Between children of the One, One Father.
The Western brothers by matter's might
have conquered my land;
Blow, blow aloud, her conch shells all!
India now invades with love,
To conquer their souls.

India

Better than Heaven or Arcadia
I love Thee, O my India!
And thy love I shall give
To every brother nation that lives.
God made the earth;
Man made confining countries
And their fancy-frozen boundaries.
But with newfound boundless love
I behold the borderland of my India
Expanding into the world.
Hail, mother of religions, lotus, scenic beauty,
And sages!
Thy wide doors are open,
Welcoming God's true sons through all ages.
Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves, and men dream
God – I am hallowed; my body touched that sod.

- Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

Thiruchittrambalam

(Salutations to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Indweller)

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