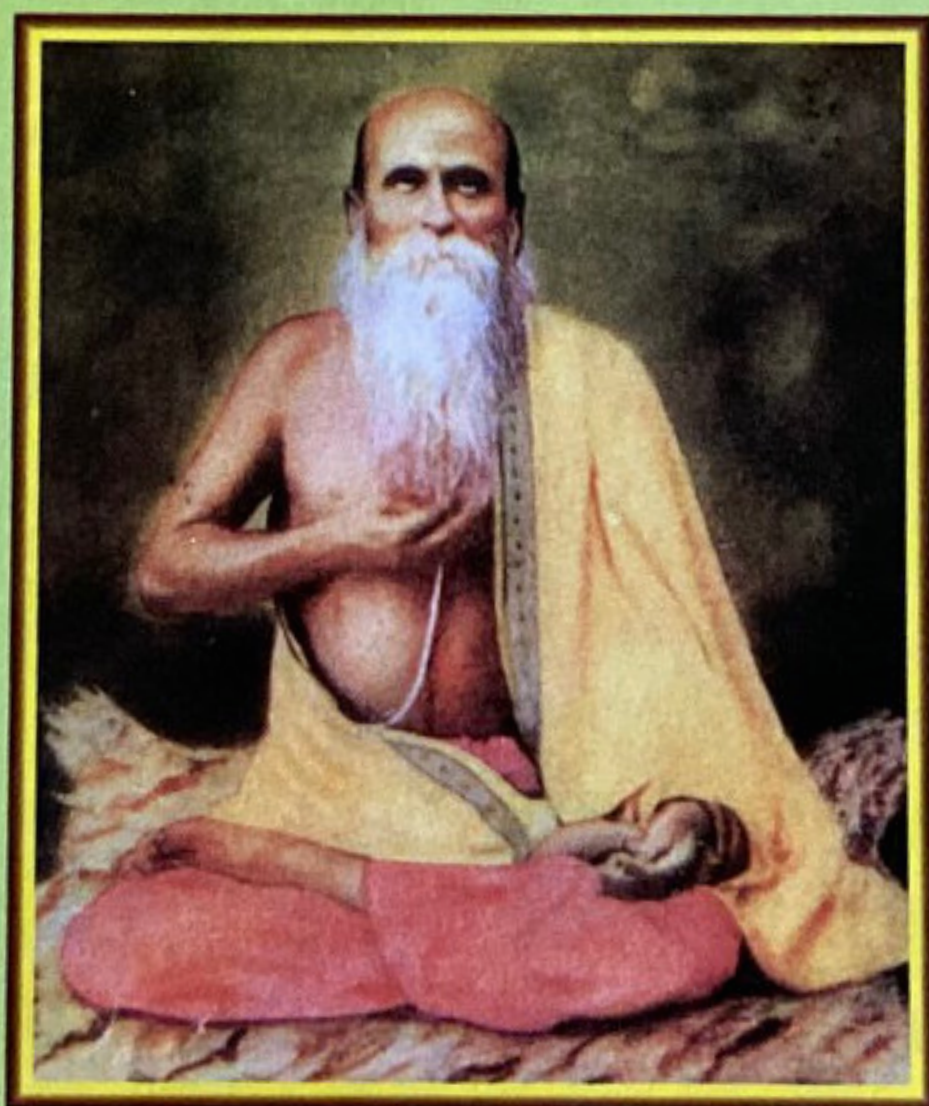


LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF MAHARSHI NAGENDRANATH

Jaba Chatterjee



**Sanatan Dharma Pracharini Sabha (1891)
Shree Shree Nagendra Math (1916)
Nagendra Mission (2005)
2B, Rammohan Roy Road
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A Short Biography

Maharshi Nagendranath was a great spiritual leader, patriot and educationist who lived and taught in the early nineteenth century in Bengal. Born in the greenery of rural Bengal in 1846, he grew up to be a very meritorious and thoughtful student. After leaving school, he joined Duff Missionary College in Calcutta with a scholarship. He returned home to his village after his graduation and started a free school for the poor and needy, in the premises of his own home. Later, at request of the zamindar of Janai, district Hooghly, he joined as the Headmaster of Janai Training High School. For the first two years of his service there he took no remuneration. When his mother became ill he left his service to be near her and to nurse her. After her demise he moved to Calcutta with the intention to spread education based on the spiritual and cultural heritage of India. He founded the Patriotic Institution in 1893 and inspired many educationists to establish such schools. He started the publication of the spiritual journal Satya Pradip (Lamp of Truth) from 1881 and started discussion session on religion and established an organization named, Sanatan

Dharma Pracharini Sabha from 1891. In his later years the Maharshi Dev concentrated more and more on spiritual practice and religious discussions. Satya Pradip is the first journal of this kind.

The Maharshi's disciples and followers had acquired land in North Calcutta in 1913 and a building was constructed, the present. The glorious incident i.e. the Blessing by Maharshidev to **Paramahansa Sri Sri Yogananda** took place here. Before going to America in 1920. He came to him prayed for the great saint's blessing. In his words the blessing was "Son go to America, Take the dignity of heavy India for your Shield. Victory is written on your brow, the noble distant people will well receive you." Sree Sree Nagendra Math Bhaban. Here from 1916 the saint spent his days in prayer, meditation and holy work and in delivering lectures on religion. He had implicit faith in Lord Krishna and lived a life of complete dedication. In the spacious prayer hall on the first floor of the Bhaban he spent hours all by himself, engaged in meditation and yoga. In these quiet years of his life he met his disciples and devotees and talked to them patiently and lovingly about God and the worship of God. After a very brief period of illness in the early dawn of November

Second, 1926, the Maharshi Dev left for his heavenly abode.

Sree Sree Nagendranath, affectionately called Apala by his mother, was different from other boys. When the others played in the open fields, climbed trees and swam in the village pond, Apala would retreat to the quiet shade of a tall Bel tree and weeping his heart out would cry inconsolably, "What will happen to me?" The passersby would wonder at this uncommon sight. Some thought that something was perhaps wrong with the child's mental health. Nobody understood that the child was suffering from a spiritual longing. His friends ran to his mother and told her, "Go and see your son, how he is crying and rolling beneath the Bel tree". His worried mother would pick him up from the dust and ask, "Why are you crying my son"? The answer lay in the unanswered questions rising in the deeply questioning mind of the boy. Like the boy Nachiketa little Apala was intrigued by questions such as, "from where have I come?" "what is my destination?" "What is the meaning of life?"

Questions of such deep spiritual significance haunted him day and night.

From his very early age Apala had a strong dependence on God. For all his troubles he sought the help of Lord Krishna. Like the little boy in the story who called to Madhusudan dada for help while crossing a deep forest, Apala called Lord "Hari" to help him solve arithmetic problems. Such devotion and faith in a little boy is celebrated also in the well known story of Dhruba. After his Sacred Thread ceremony, Apala became a strict vegetarian and also became an avid reader of religious texts. So engrossed was he in the life of holy men and saints that he would be reading about them all the time; even while walking, even while having his meals.

As little Apala grew up into a young man, he became deeply thoughtful about the Hindu religion, and like many of the intellectuals of the day, joined the Brahmo Samaj. His education and high spiritualism earned him a special recognition among the Brahmos. It is said that he met the founder of the Samaj, Maharshi Debendranath Thakur (father of Rabindranath Tagore, the celebrated poet of Bengal), and took up the post of the Acharya of Baluhati Brahmosamaj on his request. However, Sree Sree Nagendranath's independent spirit soon made him rebel against certain rigidities practised by the Brahmos. He was asked not to wear his Sacred Thread. Finding this

order to be most unreasonable and an imposition on his personal freedom, Sree Sree Nagendranath protested by resigning from his post and severing all ties with the Brahmo Samaj. Now his spiritual pursuits continued within the broad spectrum of 'Sanatan Dharma'.

In Janai Maharshi Dev held regular religious discussions in the chandimandap of the zamindar of Janai who later became a founder member of this Math. Maharshi Dev there often spoke about the rishis of ancient India. By the time he settled in Calcutta, his reputation as a spiritual leader was well established. At the request of his followers he founded the 'Sanatan Dharma Pracharini Sabha' in 1891. The main intention of this 'Sabha' was to counter the attack on Hinduism launched by the English missionaries. Earlier in 1881 Sree Sree Nagendranath started the publication of 'Satya Pradip'(The Lamp of Truth), a monthly journal. Reputed scholars of the time contributed articles on various aspects of culture and religion. Most of his time now the Maharshi spent in meditation, yoga, prayer and in religious discussions with his devotees in Calcutta. He did not travel much, but once during his stay in Calcutta he visited the holy city of Benaras and stayed there for four months in 1915.

It is said that on his way to the temple of Lord Viswanath in Benaras the Maharshi Dev often went into meditative trance. One day his disciples arranged a 'kirtan' ceremony on a large boat on the Ganges. Thakur Nagendranath's devotional songs of his own composition filled the hearts of the people gathered on the river bank with joy and bliss. In Benaras he also addressed a large gathering organised by the Sanatan Dharma Pracharini Sabha and spoke eloquently on man's highest duty. He said that loving God was the primary duty of every human being. In that holy city he met many of the great religious leaders residing there. It is said that it was here, at this time that Sadhak Nagendranath was bestowed the title "Maharishi" by the head of the 'Kasi Sumeru Math', founded by Jagatguru Sankaracharya; and other religious leaders of Benaras. In the Rik Sanhita Rishi Katyayan defines a 'Rishi' as one who has realized God. "Maharshi" means Maha Rishi, or a great Rishi. So, by this title it was acknowledged by the religious leaders of the time that Sree Sree Nagendranath was a Maha-Rishi, the great one who had realised God.

Sometime in 1881 Maharshi Nagendranath reached Allahabad with the intention of participating in the Kumbha Mela and meeting his Guru. On the dawn of

Makar Sankranti, after his holy bath Maharshi waited for His Guru, one who would initiate him into Sannyas. The great moment approached, his Guru came and initiated him. Maharshi now became a Sannyasi. He then sought his Guru's permission to leave for the Himalayas to spend his life in meditation, but his Guru did not grant him the permission. He instructed him instead, to return to Calcutta and work for the cause of Sanatan Dharma, to create awareness among people regarding the true nature of Hinduism. Following his Guru's advice Maharsi Dev renounced his saffron robe, the sign of a sannyasi, and returned to Calcutta. This incident reveals the Maharshi's great devotion for his Guru.

Like many of the great 'sadhaks' of India, Maharshi Nagendranath composed and sang devotional songs. A collection of these songs was published in 1918 under the title 'Paramartha Sangitabali'. In this context we should mention a historic meeting of the Maharshi Dev with another singer saint of nineteenth century Bengal, Sree Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa. According to the biography of the Maharshi Dev by Jyotsnamoy Bandyopadhyay, "Yuga Acharya Maharshi Nagendranath", the two saints met in the room where Sree Ramakrishna resided within the premises of the

famous Dakshineswar Kali temple. Thakur Ramakrishna greeted the Maharshi warmly and they lovingly talked about God. Then Maharshi Dev sang three songs of his own composition. The first song set to Baul music was "Agadh jaler meen tumi Hari". Here God is compared to a fish in the deep water and the devotee to an expert fisherman who catches the fish with devotion, knowledge and deep love for God. The second song was about the wayward mind that runs after the wrong things of life: "Moner moto noy jere mon." The third song was about the state of bliss man attains when he surrenders to God, "Tanu mon dhon jon /sob kori samarpan". As soon as this third song was over, Sree Ramakrishna muttered as if in a trance "Doob Doo...b"(sink, si...nk) and embraced Sree Nagendranath. This historic meeting took place in 1881.

In 1897 Swami Vivekananda said, "What is the purpose behind all these money and wealth, Maths and institutions, preaching and lecturing? There is only one purpose in the whole of life, education." Many years before this explosive message, a great sage of our soil took pioneering steps to put education at the helm. He was none other than Maharshi Nagendranath. His motto was "add to your store of knowledge every day". At an

early age, soon after his graduation, he started a free English High school in his own home. In 1892-93 he founded a school and a library in North Calcutta, The Patriotic Institution and the Patriotic Library. The library is still functioning at the present premises of Sree Sree Nagendra Math and Mission. The school closed down temporarily but was later reopened by one of his disciples, Kali Charan Chakraborty as the Town School. It is till date, one of the leading schools of Calcutta. Another disciple of the Maharsi Dev, Bhabataran Sarkar, founded another school Bharati Vidyalay. Maharshi Dev inspired all to be educated and to spread education.

The Maharshi Dev himself was learned both in Eastern and Western education. He encouraged his students to be broadminded in their approach to education, to study both modern subjects and ancient texts, science and religion, English and Sanskrit. Together with formal education, he stressed the importance of building ones character. He wrote and published for his student s 'Pratijna Sataka', one hundred oaths they were to learn by heart and follow. As a part of character building he encouraged social work. He arranged various relief works, for example, he sent relief material to floodhit Pabna, now in Bangladesh, and to Tripura. He also

provided relief to people of Hooghly, Bardhaman, and Midnapur. He sank deep wells for the tribals of Bankura. We must appreciate his pioneering effort of such organised relief work by the young men of his own Asram because it may have served as a path finder for such well known institutions of later days as the Ramakrishna Mission or the Bharat Sebashram Sangha.

Sister Nivedita founded the now famous school for girls' in Baghbazar, in November 14th, 1898. We all know the effort and dedication she had to put in to persuade the conservative society of Bengal to allow their girls to attend school. The situation could not have been much different when five years earlier, in 1893 19th April, the Mahakali Pathshala was founded by Mataji Tapasyini Maharani Gangabai. Maharshi Nagendranath was an inspiration behind the founding of this institution. This institution was set up five years earlier than Sister Nivedita's school in Baghbazar. Once again, the pioneering role of the Maharshi must be recognised here. It should be noted that Swami Vivekananda himself considered Mahakali Pathshala as a role model for girls' schools. He said, "Mahakali Pathshalati onekta thik pathe cholechhe" (Vivekananda Rachana Samagra in Bengali, vol. 9 page 29). Swamiji was talking about the syllabus to

be followed in Sister Nivedita's school. He felt that modern subjects should be taught together with traditional skills. The syllabus should be rooted in Indian values and culture and follow the Mahakali pathshala model because to a "great extent it was on the right path". Now, in 2011, the women of today, bow at the holy feet of Maharshi Nagendranath for his farsightedness and his loving heart.

In the Introduction to the Second Volume of Sree Sree Nagendra Upadeshamrita", distinguished scholar and linguist Dr. Sukumar Sen says that Maharshi reached a state of spiritual excellence through the path of learning. Dr. Sen, being an educationist himself, found this to be the most important thing about Sree Sree Nagendranath. Dr. Sen writes, "From his childhood Nagendranath had taken to the path of learning and education, throughout his life he had engaged himself in teaching and social work and this path led him to the road to spirituality. This was his unique achievement." (Translated from Bengali)

The profoundest of human wants is the want of God.

Maharshi Nagendranath

(The Levitating Saint)

In the book **"Autobiography of A Yogi"** by **Paramahansa Yogananda** (2001); Swami Yogananda devotes one chapter ['The Levitating Saint' (Nagendra Nath Bhaduri)] to his encounter with Maharshi Nagendranath. The chapter begins with the sentence "I saw a yogi remain in the air, several feet above the ground, last night at a group meeting" A friend was reporting this to the author. The author already knew about this saint. He explained to his friend, "A yogi's body loses its grossness after use of certain pranayams. Then it will levitate...Even saints who do not practise a formal yoga have been known to levitate during a state of intense devotion to God."In the Footnote the author writes about two Christian saints, St. Joseph of Cupertino and St. Teresa of Avila who found it difficult to retain their body weight, particularly in moments of spiritual elevation, and would consequently rise in the air.

The Maharshi's ashram was very close to the author's home and the author visited him quite often. In his book he calls Maharshi Nagendranath a great Yogi and says that the Maharshi had "expertly mastered" the various 'pranayams' mentioned by Patanjali (the foremost ancient exponent of yoga). The author had once witnessed the Maharshi perform the "Bhastrika

Pranayam" with such 'amazing force' that it seemed that "an actual storm had risen in the room", and immediately after this he made the storm subside and created 'an aura of peace' so beautiful that the author remembered it all his life.

Now in the presence of the author the sage locked his 'whent body' in the lotus posture, and even In his seventies, Maharshi Dev looked straight and ideal with no unpleasing signs of age. "His face was that of a rishi... He always sat firmly upright, his quiet eyes fixed on the Omnipresence." This is an eye witness account of the Maharshi Dev. He saw Maharshi Dev enter into a state of 'superconsciousness', which is a sign of a great saint. In this state saints have direct communion with God.

The young visitor found the saint specially attractive because he had a delightful sense of humour. The author told his friend, "I am vastly entertained by the wit in his wisdom." The author, then a school boy, noticed that the sage's "face was always serious, yet subtly touched with an ecstatic smile." That the saint was constantly in touch with the divine was evident from this smile in his eyes. "His lotus eyes held a hidden divine laughter". The Maharshi Dev was always in touch with heaven but he

tried to keep it 'hidden'. The laughter was 'divine' but since it was 'hidden', it had to be discovered.

The saint was in fact so self effacing, so much against any kind of publicity that he kept himself almost locked up in a single room in his hermitage; occupied in yoga and meditation all the time. He was "inaccessible to the general public". When the young visitor stated, "You are the first yogi I have known who always stays indoors", the yogi replied with a 'twinkle' in his eyes, "My rule of seclusion is not for my own comfort, but for that of others" because, the yogi added jokingly, for 'worldly people', a sage's frankness is very 'disconcerting'. However he said more seriously that God's infinite ways cannot be reduced to any single rule. All yogis need not be the same. He called himself God's saint whom God had planted 'in unexpected soil.'

Though Maharshi Dev lived almost always indoors, he corresponded with his devotees in 'far off America'. He told his young visitor."I correspond with a few societies there whose members are interested in yoga." More than one hundred years ago, when most yogis closely guarded their secrets, such open mindedness was remarkable. The Maharshi Dev was corresponding with

people whom the conservative Hindu society then looked down upon as 'mlechhas' This showed how liberated and progressive the sage was. Maharshi Dev then explained his stand on the subject, he said that knowledge of yoga, like sunlight, was for everyone. "A knowledge of yoga, like the daylight, is free to all who will receive it." We are here reminded of Swami Vivekananda's teachings in the West and his argument for taking Vedanta beyond the seas to the land of the 'mlechhas'. The Maharshi Dev further explained that for the well being of people of the East and West, 'some form of disciplinary yoga' needed be practiced. The people of the West were becoming interested in the spiritual life of India and he was 'glad to help them'. Years later when Swami Yogananda was going to the West to teach yoga, the Manarshi Dev blessed him with these parting words: "Victory is written on your brow; the noble distant people will well receive you."The words proved to be prophetic because Swami Yogananda was indeed very well received by the people of the West.

To Paramahansa Sri Sri Yogananda: "You go often into the silence, but have you developed 'anubhaba' (actual perception of God).

Paramahansa Sri Sri Yogananda confessed that Maharshi Dev's veiled prophetic guidance helped him often for actual perception of God (anubhaba)

Maharshi Dev also had veiled profetic guidance to boy Mukunda that he would carry India's teachings to America.

Maharshi Dev was an excellent teacher. He held his audience spell bound with his messages illustrated by stories from the Upanishads, Puranas, the Bhagabat Gita and other religious scriptures of the Hindus. He also told stories from the Bible. The illustrations from everyday life that we find in the 'Kathamrita' are mainly from village activities of rural Bengal. For example, Thakur Ramakrishna says, "At Kamarpukur I have seen people measuring grain. It lies in a heap. One man keeps pushing grain from the heap toward another man, who weighs it on a scale. So the man who weighs doesn't run short of grain. It is the same with the preacher who has received a commission from God. As he teaches people, the Divine Mother Herself supplies him with fresh knowledge from behind. That knowledge never comes to an end."

The Maharshi on the other hand mainly draws his everyday illustrations from his experience as a school teacher. For example he says if you eat foul food or unhealthy food you become sick and unhealthy, similarly if you read unholy books your mind will become sick and unhealthy. He gives examples from English grammar, Mathematics and other subjects. Bringing in a mathematical formula, he speaks about the infinitude of God. The formula states that when one is divided by zero, the result is infinity. $1/0 = \text{infinity}$. One stands for the Absolute, God. His infinitude can be realized only if the ego of the individual self is reduced to the state of zero. Here the saint is teaching man how in becoming self effacing he can appreciate the glory of God. The more man learns to transcend his little self, deeper will be his understanding of the greatness of God.

Religion, Maharshi Dev insists, is not only meditation or yoga but something which should be 'realized' Another great spiritual leader and teacher, Swami Vivekananda, also stresses this. The Maharshi Dev told Swami Yogananda that mastering the technique of meditation means nothing unless it is accompanied by 'Anubhab'. The Bengali word 'Anubhab' means realization. He gives some definite guide lines on how to be on the spiritual

path. Perhaps his most well known advice is "Be a sannyasi, don't pretend to be one. Pretend to be a man of the world, don't be one." On the efficacy of prayer he says "When practising 'japa' the mind might get scattered, but if you pray with emotion the mind becomes calm and concentrated" Maharshi Dev recommended an all round development of the individual. He says, "the development of body, soul and mind is the basis of peace. Man gets complete peace only if all these three are well established within him." He also says that man should not only love God but also his parents and his guru: "Devotion for God the Infinite is impossible if you do not have devotion for your mother, your father, your guru and for holy men." He asks us to take the name of God all the time. "All the time, whenever you are engaged in your domestic chores, go on taking the name of God. If you learn to take the name of God while awake, His beloved face will appear in your dream."

*Anubhab—Actual perception of God.

Maharshi Dev's advice on suffering is, "Be ready to accept suffering. Have you ever thought of the wonderful qualities that sorrow and suffering brings out of the human heart? Kindness, forgiveness and the desire to

help others" He said that suffering and hardship involved in spiritual practice makes us enjoy to a greater extent the joy of spiritual fulfilment, just as a student enjoys the joy of knowledge and learning after going through the hardship of studies. His advice is : "When you are suffering, don't try to analyze why am I suffering? Instead, call upon God. If you fall into the well, will you try to analyse, how you fell in, did someone push you etc, or will you rather try your utmost to come out? When in trouble just call upon God, He will show you the way to safety."

Most of the Maharshi Dev's teachings are to be found in the two volumes of "Sree Sree Nagendra Uppadeshamitra published by Sree Sree Nagendra Math in the year 1978 and 1981 The books are in Bengali, the language in which the Maharshi Dev spoke to his devotees. The teachings were lovingly recorded and preserved by his devotees from 1895 to 1915. Some of these were first published regularly in the monthly journal of the math, Satya Pradip. In conclusion of this section let us travel down the years to an evening when the Maharshi Dev is speaking to his devotees. As he speaks a peaceful calm fills the room. The little worries of daily life melt in this peacefulness and the minds of the

listeners rise towards God. This is how a devotee present in one such meeting describes the atmosphere". I remained alone with the yogi until his disciples arrived in the evening. Bhaduri Mahasaya began one of his inimitable discourses like a peaceful flood he swept away the mental debris of his listeners, floating them Godward."(Paramahansa Yogananda).

108 Messages from
Maharshi Nagendranath

Foreword

Many foreigners and non-Bengalis have become great devotees of Maharshi Nagendranath. Some come from distant lands and are eager to know about this great yogi. We have two publications of his biography in English. However, the devotees are eager to read the saint's teachings, in his own words. The present booklet is a translation of the Maharshi's teachings, selected and translated by Jaba Chatterjee. A translation of the yugacharya's teachings will enable those readers who cannot read Bengali, to understand and appreciate him better. The words of the saint can be compared to the sweet fragrance of jasmine, and the light of the lamp; as the words spread they enlighten souls and fill hearts with purity and joy. The speeches selected for translation are all from "Sree Sree Nagendra Upodeshamrita" Volume 1. We hope to bring out a similar book of translation of his sayings from Volume 2 of the "Upodeshamitra." Apart from non-Bengali speaking devotees, we hope this book will also be read by others too. The selected speeches are short, to the point and the English is simple and easy.

Since it is a slim volume, it can be carried easily and referred to at any time.

Let the blessings of our 'sadguru', Maharshi Nagendranath, be showered on all.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Acharya, Sree Sree Nagendra Math and Nagendra
Mission **Raghupati Mukhopadhyay**

Introduction

Maharshi Sree Nagendranath lived in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Bengal. He was a devoted spiritual leader, a great patriot and a renowned educationist. His early life he spent amidst the greenery of rural Bengal but later he moved to Calcutta, the hotbed of religious and political stirrings. In the city he lived in many places and finally settled in a house at 2B Rammohan Roy Road (then it was an extension of Sukia Street), in 1916. He lived there till his demise in 1926.

The Maharshi had many devotees and followers, among whom there were several scholars and academicians. He preached to small gatherings assembled at the places of his residence. The proceedings of these meetings and discussions were faithfully noted down by his disciples and followers and later published in several issues of the monthly journal "Satya Pradeep", brought out by 'Sanatan Dharma Pracharini Shabha', an organization founded by the Acharya to spread consciousness about Hinduism, specially Vedic teachings. The messages were regularly published in the journal continuously for

six years. Many years later, Srimat Bhakti Prakash Maharaj, the second President of Sree Acharya Nagendranath Math, collected and compiled these sayings and published them in two volumes. The books are entitled "Sree Sree Nagendra Upodeshamrita", Volume 1 and Volume II. The original discussions were held in Bengali and consequently the books are also in Bengali. Recently there has been a growing demand for a translation of his teachings and the present effort is a modest attempt to comply with this demand.

The present text is a translation of the Maharshi's teachings, selected and taken from Volume 1 of 'Upodeshamrita'. With all humility I beg to state that the translation has been a very rewarding and enlightening work. It provided me an opportunity to study deeply the great sage's teachings and their simplicity and clarity I found extremely striking. He illustrates his messages with very interesting stories and anecdotes and his vast and deep knowledge of the Hindu scriptures leaves one awestruck. However, he has the wonderful capacity to make even the most difficult concepts easily comprehensible. What is more, his approach is very practical and down to earth. Most of his teachings deal with our everyday experiences, for example, how to use

our ears and our eyes, how to pray, when to pray, how to offer anything to God etc. He uses simple, direct language and he has a tone that is endearing and reassuring. He makes you feel that if you follow his advice you can be a better human being and come closer to God. The teachings instil a strong sense of hope and optimism in the reader.

In conclusion I would like to add that I sincerely apologize for any error that may have occurred, unintentionally, in the translation. I have tried my best to be faithful to the original and if I have been able to deliver even a small percentage of the great message of this great sage through the translation, the credit is entirely his. He has been a constant source of inspiration.

Whenever I have been at a loss for the correct word or an apt expression, I have prayed for his help and he has answered my prayer with all kindness. There is an oft repeated saying in Bengali, "Ganga jaley Ganga puja" (Worshipping the river Ganga with water from the river Ganga).

This little book of translation is my humble offering to this great saint, who like the holy river Ganga, brought the

water of holy thoughts to the people of Kolkata to
cleanse and purify them with his godly words.

The Author

Some extraordinary happenings related to Maharshi Nagendranath's life

We have no information regarding the initial stages of Mahendra Nagendranath's spiritual life. During his sacred thread ceremony, he must have been initiated in the Gayatri Mantra by his Acharya Guru, but nothing is known about his guru. We do not even know if he was formally initiated by the family guru. Maharshi had himself said that he was not initiated by any human being but by God Himself. Every day during his daily puja, he would have darshan of Lord Narayana Himself. That is why he closed the door of the room where he was praying. His mother Tripura Sundari also reported that when Maharshi Nagendranath would read the Gita, she had the vision of a very handsome figure, who was none but their family guru - Shree Shree Damodarji standing near him. Maharshi Nagendranath also used to talk to God directly inside a closed room. Sometimes some of his intimate devotees heard him speak softly from behind the closed door.

Though it is not known exactly when and how Sree Nagendranath became Maharshi Nagendranath, in the book entitled "Maharshi Nagendranath", by Jyotsnamoy Bandyopadhyay, a strange anecdote is narrated. It was the beginning of summer in Kolkata. In the hot mid-day sun a sadhu with knotted hair was searching in the neighborhood of Shree Nagendranath's living place. He was looking for a saint who lived nearby. By chance he met Dhyan Prakash Maharaj, who was a close disciple and attendant of Shree Nagendranath and from him he came to know about the acharya. When he insisted that he must meet the saint, Dhyan Prakash tried to dissuade him, saying that the saint usually took rest in the afternoon - so they should not disturb him. Just then they heard Shree Nagendranath's voice and he asked the sadhu to come upstairs. When the sanyasi met Sree Nagendranath the sannyasi just stared at him in wonder and said, "Yes, yes, he is the one! Here is the blessed one! The virtuous one!" Then the two of them spoke closely with each other and before departure the sanyasi turned towards DhyanPrakash and said:

"You have been living with this yogi for many years. Do you know who he is? He is a 'maharshi', sent by God to

spread spirituality in this world. Today, having seen him I have been honored."

When the sanyasi was saying these words to Srimat DhyanPrakash - Thakur Nagendranath was immersed in 'samadhi' (a trance).

It is said that after his college education, Sri Nagendranath practiced yoga in his own home. After only six months he attained the power to counter gravitational pull and could remain in the air. Once his mother discovered him in the floating posture and was frightened. The great yogi, **Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda** in his famous autobiography - "Autobiography of a Yogi" - refers to Sri Nagendranath as the "Levitating Saint". Yogananda had deep knowledge of yoga and a vast experience of meeting spiritual 'guru's of contemporary India (early 20th century). Among others he met Swami Pranabananda, Sri Yukteswar, Babaji, The 'Perfume Saint', "The Tiger Swami," A Mohammedan Wonder Worker (Azfal Khan), 'Master Mahasaya' , the author of Sri Ramakrishna's Kathamrita, Luther Burbank ("A Saint Amid the Roses"). When a man with such a vast experience praises the spiritual greatness of Maharshi Nagendranath, it has special significance. He writes, "I

have seen him in remarkable feats. He has expertly mastered the various 'pranayamas' mentioned in the ancient eightfold yoga outlined by Patanjali. Once [he] – performed the 'Bhastrika Pranayama' before me with such amazing force that it seemed an actual storm had arisen in the room! Then he extinguished the thundering breath and remained motionless in a high state of superconsciousness. The aura of peace after the storm was vivid beyond forgetting ." Another extraordinary experience the Swami had in the company of the Maharshi is reported in the following manner : " I remained alone with [him]—until his disciples arrived in the evening. He began one of his inimitable discourses. Like a peaceful flood he swept away the mental debris of his listeners, floating them Godward."

Such high public tribute to a spiritual personality deserves our special attention. This is more so, because Maharshi Nagendranath was so self-effacing, so earnestly shunned all publicity. Furthermore, such high praise coming from one who was not his direct disciple points out to us the splendid glow of the Maharshi's spirituality.

Maharshi Nagendranath himself has said that he was initiated not by any human being but by Lord Narayana Himself. It is believed that Lord Narayana Himself instructed Sri Nagendranath to defend and spread the message of 'Sanatan Dharma' (Religion Eternal). Furthermore, during his daily Puja he would have a direct 'darshan' of Lord Narayana. That is why during his 'puja' he insisted on closing the door. Often from behind the closed door some of his devotees heard him talking to someone in a low voice. Sri Nagendranath read the holy Gita every day. During such reading his mother, Tripura Sundari Devi, witnessed the presence of a man of splendid beauty, who was none but the family guru himself, Sri Damodarji. Pleased with Sri Sri Nagendranath's deep spiritual leanings, Damodarji though physically absent, presented himself before Sri Nagendranath in his material form.

Through his arduous and deep spiritual practice, Maharshi Nagendranath attained yogic power which was manifested occasionally for the welfare of his devotees. The suffering and sickness of people touched him deeply

and in order to cure them, it was his regular practice to provide them with "jalpara" - that is "holy water" specially empowered by the utterance of mystical 'mantras' over it.

He cured several sick people by making them drink this water. Once his close devotee Shashi Bhusan Bhattacharya's only son Kalicharan was attacked with the critical disease, Asiatic Cholera. The Bhattacharyas lived in Madan Ghosh Lane. The doctors had all given up hope. At this critical stage the patient's mother cried and prayed to Maharshi Nagendranath. He gave the special water for the patient to drink and soon after Kalicharan recovered.

Once Maharshi Nagendranath with his yogic power attracted a critical disease from a sick person into his own body. While he suffered, the sick man was cured. It was in 1910, in the month of 'Jaistha' (mid May - mid June) a young man of the locality, who had been recently married for only five months became critically ill. In apprehension of his imminent death, his family members began to cry. Maharshi Nagendranath heard about the incident from one of his attendants. Moved by the

mishap, Maharshi Nagendranath went to the house, asked the inmates to remove the cloth covering the patient's body and stared at the patient for five long minutes. Then he returned home with unsteady steps and lay down, covering himself with a blanket. He asked his attendant not to disturb him till he himself should call for his attendance. Three whole days passed. The patient gradually recovered, as the sage lay ill. At the moment the sage had put off the patient, the patient's condition started improving. The sage had taken the disease upon himself and had suffered so acutely that when he rose from his sick bed after three days there was a shade of darkness quite visible on his appearance.

Maharshi Nagendranath had an extraordinary insight and far sight. The practice of "black magic" was quite common at that time in Calcutta. Kedarnath Biswas lived in 23, Badridas Temple Street. A woman had chopped off a little of his eldest son's hair - with the intention of making an amulet with the hair, so that she could give birth to a live baby but Kedarnath's son Sarat would die. Sarat's "dhai ma" (a woman who looked after him) prayed to Maharshi Nagendranath saying, "Please

Thakur, save Sarat, see to it that no harm is done to him". The family members took Sarat to Maharshi Nagendranath but even without having prior information, Maharshi Nagendranath knew of their coming and was watching for their approach from his balcony. They came and with his protection and assurance - the boy was out of danger.

The wife of Sri Gokul Chandra Laha often visited Thakur. Her brother, Pramathanath Dey lived in Jhamapukur in North Calcutta. He was unemployed but had a large family to support. With his seven children he was living in abject poverty when at the advice of his elder sister he decided to meet Maharshi Dev. It was heavy monsoon in Kolkata with incessant rains. The roads were water logged. At 8:30 in the late evening Pramathanath set out for Maharshi Nagendranath's residence which was close by. The saint was not informed about this visit. However, by some strange power Maharshi Nagendranath knew of Pramathanath's coming. At the time that Pramathanath started from his home, the sage told his attendant: "After about five to seven minutes, Pramathanath is coming here. Take the lantern and stand near the staircase. He

is making an arduous journey, don't prolong his suffering by making him wait at the foot of dark stairs." Exactly after five to seven minutes Pramathanath arrived and told Thakur about his poverty. Soon after his visit, Pramathanath got a good job and could well provide for his family. Thakur Nagendranath had heard his prayer and though he had no prior information knew of his coming even before he actually arrived. The kind saint received the visitor and granted his prayer.

The saint was all kindness for all. His disciples, devotees, the local people and even strangers were blessed by him. He helped them when they prayed to him. He helped them even when he just heard about their troubles. Such was the largeness of this great soul. His life was one long prayer and meditation and being a true devotee, he was conscious of God's grace every moment of his life. And each moment of his holy life he spent for the benefit of all, sweeping away our "mental debris...floating them Godward." We kneel down and bow our heads and worship this great saint for the opportunity he has given us to know and understand only a tiny

corner of his wonderful life. We pray that we may come to know him and understand him better as days go by.

108 MESSAGES

1. A real well-wisher is one who shows us the way to be united with God, who guides us along the path laid down by God.
2. Do not continuously pray for this and that. You do not know what is really good for you. You have forgotten your past, you are ignorant of your future and know very little of your present. God is omniscient so He makes all arrangements for you, with complete knowledge of your Past, Present and Future. Furthermore, He is also kindness personified. He has unending kindness for all His creatures. Therefore think, "Whatever God does is always for our good, He gives us whatever is beneficial for us." Thus leaving everything to Him, live your life.
3. In the kingdom of God's kindness no one will be left out o His grace.
4. Human nature is a combination of good and evil. Depending upon the place, time, subject and

environment, one part of a man's nature is manifested and the other remains suppressed. In holy company his good qualities such as, kindness, purity, knowledge and non-violence will flourish. In evil company opposite qualities such as cruelty, selfishness, ignorance will flourish. That is why all great sages Kabir, Shankaracharya, Tulsidas and others have asked us always to be in the company of the holy and the saintly.

5. Try and repeat the name of God all the time. The more you repeat His name, the more you develop a taste for it. When you repeat a recipe over and over again it becomes distasteful but when you repeat the name of God it becomes more and more tasty because the taste is new with each repetition.
"Nityang Nabang Nabam"
6. Sinners do not have a taste for the Divine name. Even when they visit sages and saints they engage themselves in idle and trivial worldly talks. When there is honey and waste product in one place, the ordinary fly will sit on the waste and avoid the honey. Similarly sinners will choose to talk about the

evil in others and avoid talking about their good qualities.

7. The name of God is like the sun. It dispels all darkness, clearing the sins of this life and also the sins of other lives. Can there be any darkness once the sun rises? Can there be any sin and evil when the name of God is taken?
8. If you want your death to be a happy one and your life to be a comfortable one, then think of Lord Govinda's lotus feet and surrender your all to Him.
9. The mind can concentrate only on one subject at a time. If you want to concentrate on any one subject, think of all the other subjects and objects as irrelevant or unimportant. God is our dearest; and our greatest well wisher. The more you concentrate on God, the more you benefit, because there is no end to His goodness and His love.
10. It is wrong to assume that only the learned has the right to hear about God and the ignorant has no such right. Anyone who is eager about God has the right to hear about Him and take to His name.

11. Never think that you are a sinner, or that you have no love and devotion for God. Your goodness and love for God are now unmanifested. In the company of holy men all your good qualities will be manifested.
12. Devotion to God is man's basic nature. It is not something that is external to him. There are a few methods which, if followed sincerely, devotion can be acquired. The "Srimadbhagabath" has instructed one to follow these methods:
- i) Follow the Scriptures and holy texts.
 - ii) Reject what the Scriptures tell you to reject.
 - iii) Remember God alone is the Owner of this universe. With this belief, resign wholly at His feet.
 - iv) God is always with us, He will protect us. He has sent us to this world to do His work, to make Him happy. Spend your life in the service of God.
13. If you live with your wife, children and relatives, it does not make you worldly. When you get bonded to the cycle of life and death through being attached to desires, then you become worldly. Worldliness is without a beginning but can be brought to an end. The devotee who has gained spiritual wisdom can

bring his worldliness to an end. To kill the enemy one needs various weapons, to destroy worldliness one needs only one weapon the weapon of the Holy name of God.

14. Have deep and complete faith in God. Half-hearted faith only makes you ask for this and that from Him. Depend on God and He will take up all your responsibilities. We do not depend on Him, that is why we fall into dangers. God can take best care of us because he alone knows what is really good for us.
15. God has the Cutting Wheel in His hand and with it He cuts into bits and pieces all human sorrow. However, sorrow is the touchstone of life. An immature devotee blames God whenever he has to face sorrow. He then stops repeating God's name and calling Him. The mature devotee who has realized that God is our only refuge, embraces God more ardently in the time of sorrow and danger.
16. The needle of a compass always points towards the North. The North has a power to attract the needle which the other directions do not have. Similarly God

has the power to pull us towards Him and no other object has this power.

17. As your physical body needs healthy and wholesome food to keep you fit and happy, so also your mental or subtle body needs sustenance to keep your mind healthy and happy. Any holy talk about God provides this sustenance to your subtle body. The company of saints and sages keeps you physically and mentally fit and happy. Avoid persons who cannot supply mental sustenance. They will starve you mentally and make you ill.
18. All worldly talk is like the croaking of a frog. As the frog unknowingly invites the snake with its croaking, so also man unknowingly invites death with his worldly prattle. Engage only in God related talk, that will endear you to God.
19. You do not have to renounce the world, nor should you be immersed in the worldly. Do all your worldly work but surrender your heart at the lotus feet of the Lord. Let your body perform all your worldly duties but let your mind be with God. If you can perform your worldly duties with God-consciousness, you will

become one with the Lord at the end. Sukhdev lived such a life.

20. For the common man Bhakti path is the best way to reach God, because our longing for God finds best expression in devotion or Bhakti. Once a devotee attains Bhakti it becomes very easy for him to surrender everything he has at the lotus feet of the Lord. His wife and children, his life and wealth, all he surrenders spontaneously.

21. The Bhagabat mentions eleven paths within the Bhakti movement. If anyone follows any one of these paths, he can attain Moksha, salvation. Here is the list of the eleven Paths and the names of those who attained salvation by following one of these paths:

i) Through the hearing about God, the best example is King Parikshit.

ii) Through Kirtan\Devotional songs, the best example is Devarshi Narada.

iii) Through Remembrance, the best example is Prahlad.

iv) By' Pada shevan'(attending to the Lord's Lotus Feet), the best example is Devi Lakshmi.

v) By 'Archana'(worship, offering and paying homage), the best example is Raja Prithu.

vi) Through 'Bandana" (Singing in praise of the Lord), the best example is Boliraj.

vii) Through Service to God, the best example is Hanuman.

viii) Through Friendship, the best example is Arjuna.

ix) Through Self Surrender, the best example is Karna.

x) Through Meditation and Concentration, the best example is Mahadeva.

xi) Through Love and longing, the best example is Srimati Radha.

In Kali Yuga the human mind is extremely unsettled and cannot concentrate on a single path, therefore all these various paths have to be combined. Through day and night let your mind be with God: Worship Him through day and night by Kirtan, love and longing, service and self surrender. Do not ever leave Him. Be with him always.

22. The best medicine for the mind becoming old and decrepit is the holy name of the Lord. Take the name of Lord Govinda, hear His praise and sing His praise. It is extremely beneficial for all: worldly people, those who have attained 'Moksha' and for the spiritual aspirant. However, the Lord's name is specially prescribed for worldly people because the holy Name is the best cure for all worldly diseases. The worldly are continuously stricken by sorrow through poverty, sickness, heartache etc, and this makes the mind decrepit.
23. Suffering is of two types: physical and spiritual. Suffering attached to the body, for example, suffering which is caused by disease is physical sorrow. Suffering related to the mind caused through ignorance, illusion, delusion, infatuation etc, is spiritual suffering. The doctor treats physical suffering but only the holy and saintly man can treat spiritual suffering.
24. There are two types of love: one that makes you cry and the other that brings you peace. The mind is like a child, always wanting this and that. Even when a man has a good wife and family, wealth and friends

and luxury and power, he suffers from a feeling of want. He feels that he needs to love someone else, possess something more, and have more power and knowledge. This constant sense of want makes him cry. Only when one loves and realizes God who is a mine of joy, does one have a sense of fulfillment. He does not want anything else and his mind is now filled with peace.

25. Practice 'japa', repeating the holy name of God, with intense emotion. Sit down to 'japa with this longing in your heart: "Worldly affairs are burning my soul. When will I be able to soothe my burning soul in your presence, O my God, you the Soul Soother?" During 'japa' think: "My God is sitting in front of me, so I must repeat His name with full concentration, He is listening to me. If I lose my concentration He will go away." God is Delight, His presence spreads joy so, remembering this, practice 'japa'.

26. At the beginning you may not be able to practice 'japa', with concentration. First learn to have control over your body. Lessen your food intake, regularly observe 'brata and upavas, (voluntary religious observance and fasting). There is an intimate

connection between the body and the mind. When the body is under control, the mind will also be controlled. By eating in excess and sleeping in excess, the body becomes prone to ease and luxury. Destroy your old routine and introduce a new routine to guide your physical life. Be strict with your mind. Take up an aggressive attitude towards it and see how your mind will be under your control. With your body and mind under your control, you can practice 'japa' with full concentration.

27. There is a difference between want and a feeling of want. For example, truant children running away from school will be wanting in education, but they will not have the realization of their want. These children do not understand the value of education. Their parents know that education gives knowledge and provides a means to livelihood, so they realize that their children are missing out on something valuable. They feel sorry and concerned for their children. Similarly, the saintly and holy men feel concerned and sorry for the common man for his want of spiritual inclination and pursuit, while the common man does not have any realization of his own want.

28. Our outer need is food and water, our inner need is God-consciousness, God-realization. The moment you feel this inner want, your longing for God becomes intense. You want to feel His presence in your heart of hearts. You realize that He is the Man of your inner Soul, He is the Man your mind longs for, He is your 'Moner Manush'(The Man of your mind). For each individual his 'Moner Manush' is none but God Himself.
29. Man's greatness lies in that he alone among all God's creatures realizes that God is our Father. Though God has created all the creatures, man alone recognizes Him as the Creator. Man alone can pray to Him as our Father and Creator and Protector. We call Him 'Our Father' and thank Him for the beautiful and wonderful world he has created.
30. A boy who has not labored for education at a young age will not be able to enjoy the fruits of education at a later age. A man who has not labored for wealth will not be able to enjoy wealth later in life. So also one who has not faced the trials and tribulations of spiritual pursuit, he will not be able to enjoy spiritual bliss in later life.

31. When you live with your wife and children and have family responsibilities, you will not have time for two to three hours of prayer and meditation daily. Do not worry, just repeat the name of the Lord whenever you can, wherever you are-be it on the shore, the road, or in your sick bed. You do not have to worry whether you are doing it correctly or not. Your only duty is to call upon Him with an open heart, He will listen to your call.
32. The power of the Lord's name is such that if any one asks for anything taking His holy name, he gets it. God does not Himself, however, grant any material gift. His gifts are only spiritual gifts. The power of His name may bring material benefits to those who seek it, but God Himself prefers to shower only spiritual benefits.
33. Pray to God as much as you can. Whenever you face disease, sorrow, pain or any suffering, pray to Him for relief. You will get His response immediately. He is nearer than the nearest and can therefore hear you instantly and clearly. He will grant you your prayer. However, if your prayer is evil or wrong he will listen

to your prayer but he will not grant you what you pray for.

34. However hard you may pray, God will not hurt anyone to grant you your prayer.
35. Absence of contentment is sorrow. Be content, contentment leads to highest happiness. Avoid being too ambitious. Be happy with your present condition. Man really needs very little. He needs two sets of clothing, two cups of rice and four arms length of sleeping ground and God provides these without your asking. Man suffers because his desire is endless.
36. Suppose on a dark night you are walking down a lonely road with a little child. To prevent your eyes from wandering in the darkness and feeling insecure, you try to fix your gaze on the child. You try and listen to the voice of the child and prevent yourself from hearing the different sounds of the night. Even when the child does not quite understand or respond to you, you go on talking to him. All this provides you with a sense of security in a dark night. Similarly, walking on the path of your worldly life, fix your gaze on God and go on calling Him. It does not matter whether you get a reply or not, keep on calling Him.

Do not give up, it will provide you with a sense of solace and security.

37. When you are in a crowded market place you may not hear the voice of someone talking to you from a distance because of the din. Similarly, when your mind is not calm and peaceful but full of commotion, you cannot hear the Voice of God. When you calm your mind and listen with attention and full faith, you can hear Him. He responds to every call of ours, only we must be prepared to hear Him.
38. Place yourself, and keep yourself within the 'Divine Circle'. Just as Sita was established within the 'Ram-Circle' by Laksman, so also establish your life within the Divine -Circle. Sita was carried away by the demon Ravana when she stepped out of the circle, so also you will be carried away by evil and immorality, if you step out of the Divine Circle drawn by God - consciousness. Do not step out of the 'God Circle'.
39. Those who are wayward and licentious do not want to be restricted by any boundary, and this leads to so much of suffering and immorality in this world. God has only created goodness and joy. We create evil

and sorrow. Just as the absence of light is the cause of darkness, so also the absence of morality and joy leads to immorality and sorrow. Nature abhors vacuum. When there is no light, there is darkness, when there is no morality, there is immorality. So, one must abide by the moral laws, be restricted by moral boundaries.

40. There are some people who, failing to explore and appreciate the wonder and the greatness of the Gita, waste their time in arguing over which portion of the Gita is original and which portion is interpolated. The situation is somewhat like when two persons sit down to lunch and one starts eating and enjoying the food, while the other instead of eating and enjoying the lunch, starts analysing the chemical components of the rice and vegetables placed before him. The intelligent and sensible reader enjoys and appreciates the text of the Gita but the worldly reader who is busy analysing the veracity of the text, misses the heavenly bliss the Gita provides.

41. The setting of the Gita in the Mahabharata is this: The great war of Kurukhetra was about to begin. The two generals were arranging their respective armies in the battlefield. Arjuna was reluctant to take up

arms against his close relatives and respected ones and Sri Krishna was motivating him to fight against injustice. Gita is the lesson that Sri Krishna gives Arjuna at this critical juncture. It is believed that it took Sri Krishna not more than 15-20 minutes, because He is the 'Lord of Yoga' who can turn one year into one moment if He so wishes.

42. A battlefield is the meeting place of life and death. At this juncture the significance of spiritual advice is best realized. The timing and the place of the Gita, so chosen by Sri Krishna for His advice to Arjuna, are therefore ideal for such spiritual discourse.
43. The ability to realize and appreciate the spiritual content of the Gita is a sign of one's good fortune. Everyone does not have such good fortune, those who have, for them Dharma (religion), Artha (wealth), Kaam (all desired objects), and Moksha are all well under their control. However, to understand the final message of the Gita one needs to have continuous and long standing practice of spirituality.
44. There are two types of strength: physical and mental. Mental strength is more powerful than physical strength. Those who have no mental strength, they

depend on physical strength alone. The worth of the work done through physical strength is not even one fourth of that which can be achieved through mental strength. The great sages of the world have no muscle power, man power, power of wealth or power of arms. Their only strength is spiritual strength.

45. It is not the work of holy men to set up 'Maths and Missions'. It is done through the donations given by the devotees, who have family ties. Look at the sadhus; however large the establishment may be, he lives on bare necessities, he is in his loin cloth. Holy men have no connection with worldly goods or material wealth. Gold, silver and precious jewels are like poison to him.

46. Lord Sri Krishna is an ideal son, an ideal friend, an ideal lover, an ideal king, an ideal hero, an ideal yogi and an ideal politician. Can such a Great Man of action advise everyone to renounce everything and become 'sannyasis'? He has sent us to this world of activities to be active.

He has told us to enjoy life, only we should offer Him whatever we want to enjoy and receive it as a blessing from Him. Also, the result of our activities we

should surrender to Him and live with a sense of non-attachment.

47. If God wanted man to renounce wealth and women, He would not have created them. The scriptures speak highly of women. A woman is described as the other 'half of man, thereby giving her equal status. She is also said to be the embodiment of Power. Money is needed to maintain a family, to do good work and to run good organizations. The great Sankaracarya when he said 'thamanarthang', he was not denouncing money but the excessive greed for it.
48. Do not confuse images of gods and goddesses with dolls. Images are meant to be worshipped but dolls are meant to be played with. Images are divine representations, an image is for us God Himself; but a doll is merely a material object.
49. The presence of God in the animate and the inanimate, the realization of Consciousness even in the inanimate: This is the unique belief of the Hindus.
50. Every religion leads to the same destination, the inner message of every religion is the same. Differences of geographical locations, local culture and tradition however, give rise to different rites and

rituals, thus making way for external differences. For example different geographical locations have different concepts of 'heaven'. That is, imagined heavens become different with changing locations. Those living in cold, snow-covered countries imagine a heaven where four suns rise every day and keep the rooms warm even in the middle of the night. Those living in the desert imagine that after they die and when they go to heaven, they will sleep in huts beside a blue lake surrounded by cool palm trees.

51. The Vedas is the mother of all religions but this has not been acknowledged universally because of ignorance. Vedic religion, its content and significance need to be thoroughly analyzed and researched into- but who will do this? Everyone is confined in his own narrow circle and imagines that his religion is the best. Those who have reached the end of the spiritual path, they alone understand the true significance of the Vedas. Those wise men who have studied and discussed the Vedas, such as Maxmuller and Spinoza, they have all declared the Vedas to be the mother of all religions.

52. Food and other articles can become 'prasad' in three ways: Through God's or any holy man's eating of the

food, through his using of any article; or by merely looking at it the food and the articles become 'prasad'. The offerings to God become Prasad when the devotee offers them with faith and devotion. You may wonder how anything can remain the same even after it has been used, but this can happen. For example, take a bunch of flowers and enjoy its fragrance as long as you can. The flowers remain exactly the same even after this. Similarly the offerings remain exactly the same even after God has accepted and enjoyed them. When someone eats Prasad his mind and body are purified and he receives the blessings of God.

53. The mind and the body of a holy man are steeped in the quality of 'sattva', (spirit of renunciation and purity). Consequently the aura emanating from him is 'sattvik' and anyone or anything coming into contact with this aura receives the quality of 'sattva'. The food and the articles touched or 'used' by saints and sages thus become 'prasad' and has the power to infuse goodness, purity, and joy.
54. There is a difference between food left over by an ordinary person and the food partaken and left by a holy man. The former should not be eaten, it is

harmful but the latter if eaten with faith, purifies both the mind and the body.

55. Attaining God should be the highest goal for all. Other possessions are of no importance. Even birds and animals spend their lives eating and sleeping. If man also spends his life in the same way, why was he given this precious human life? That is why all sages and devotees put everything aside and live only with God-consciousness, realizing His goodness and greatness all the while. They get attached to Him and feel happy to perform tasks that please God. God in turn, shoulders all their responsibilities.
56. Even those who are not God's devotees are not deprived of His grace. While the devotees live every moment rejoicing in the grace of God, non devotees just live their lives but do not have the capacity to take joy in God's grace.
57. If you have devotion, take the name of God and call Him; if you do not have devotion, even then call Him. Do not ever stop calling Him. The moment you stop taking His name, you will fall into the realm of 'Maya' and have endless troubles. Your only duty is to go on

calling Him. Do not worry whether you are following the correct method, it is God's worry.

58. How much power do we have? Everyone's power comes from God. Everyone is doing everything; moving, talking eating etc with His grace, His Power. God is the pure omnipresent Fire, from whose Light the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies get their light. However impure we may be, the closer we get to God, our Impurities will burn away in the purity of His Fire.
59. Have faith in God. If you can walk alone in the dark night believing nothing will happen to you, if you can sit before the hair cutter believing he will cut your hair and not your throat, if you can eat the food served to you believing it is wholesome and not poisoned, why can you not trust God who is all love and kindness? Call Him with complete faith in His goodness and power.
60. The power and quality of God's name is such that anyone taking His Name gets whatever he wants. However, just as parents do not fulfil any wrong or harmful wishes of the child thinking of his welfare; so also God does not grant man's prayers if it is harmful.

61. Do not ever encourage anger. Anger gives rise to attachment and desire and this makes you lose your sense of right and wrong. You lose your sense of judgment, you forget your duty, you even forget who you are. Consequently by travelling the path of wrong and evil you tend towards destruction. From ancient times till today much havoc has been wrought through anger. Even the results of prayer and meditation are lost when one is angry.
62. When silence meets Silence, one goes into a spiritual trance. God is the ultimate Silence. He is so refined and subtle that you cannot see Him or hear Him with your physical ears and eyes. You need concentration to perceive anything which is too fine, similarly you need full concentration to perceive God and have God realization. With your senses completely withdrawn you fall into silence and in this silence you have a realization of the Silent One.
63. A spoilt child is always demanding this and that from his mother. He does not let her have a moment of peace. Each of us is like the spoilt child, always demanding something or the other from Mother Goddess, may be that is why she hides from us?

64. Just as when the mother puts 'kajal' on the child's eyes, she does so to make the eyes look beautiful and improve the eyesight and not to make his eyes weak and ugly; so also God gives us suffering and hardship not to harm us, but for our benefit.
65. Sorrow that reminds us of Lord Govinda should be welcome, but luxury and enjoyment that make us forget Govinda should be rejected.
66. One who loves lord Govinda and lives in a small, dark hut and does not possess gold, silver or any precious jewels is a rich man. Someone who does not love God and lives in a grand house and possesses gold, silver, precious jewels and elephants and horses, is a poor man.
67. When zero is put after any number then only the zero attains any value. We are all zeroes and we can only attain some value if we come close to, be attached to lord Govinda.
68. 'Bhakti' (Devotion), is an inherent quality of human nature. It is in the heart of every creature. Under worldliness and evil, it remains suppressed and is not manifested. In the company of holy men, one hears

repeated discussions about God and then suppressed devotion becomes manifested.

69. Suppose treasure is hidden within a room but the inmates know not about it. Then one day a holy man comes and tells them about the treasure. The inmates then recover it and enjoy it. Similarly holy men and saints tell us about our 'hidden' devotion to make us aware of the treasure within us. We can then realize the 'Bhakti' which is embedded in our hearts.
70. 'Bhajan' (the singing of holy songs and hymns) is the highest form of work for mankind. However, most of us do not understand this truth.
71. Pray, pray to God intensely and under all circumstances. Disease, pain, sorrow or immoral thoughts---whenever you suffer from any of these, pray to God for relief. If you pray sincerely and with full faith, you will surely get an instant reply. He hears all our prayers and grants us our prayer, provided it is right and beneficial.
72. You need not necessarily know God in order to love Him. We all eat rice without knowing its chemical composition, even then we enjoy eating it and it

nourishes us. Look at the fish in the sea. They know nothing of the vastness and depth of the sea, yet they live happily in the sea water. Likewise, great devotees of Lord Vishnu, Sri Narada Muni, and others, all live in the deep ocean of divine love; without attempting to analyze the nature of this ocean.

73. Your mind and the world will never give you full opportunity to pray. You have to call God in spite of your sickness, suffering and restlessness. If you think you will take His name when you have mental peace, and you are feeling physically fit, then that time will never come. If you stand by the sea shore and say, "Let the waves stop, and then I shall bathe", in that case you will never be able to bathe in the sea at all.
74. The easiest way to attain God is through 'Bhakti', Devotion.
75. Prahlad, the great boy devotee of Lord Vishnu said to God, "Serving you is my only joy. I want no other joy." This is the highest form of Bhakti, known as "Ahaituki Bhakti", or Spontaneous Bhakti.
76. The concept of "Aheituki Bhakti" is not only a part of myth and legend but a reality which has been proved

by many Bhaktas. In more recent times great devotees, such as Sri Chaitaniya Mahaprabhu, Ramanuj, Shankar, Sri Tailangaswami, Ramdas Kathiababa, Bhagabandas and others have all realized Ahaituki Bhakti, 'Devotion to God, for the sake of God'. It is possible to attain such devotion.

77. When you do not want anything from God, when you love Him because He is lovable, when serving Him becomes your only joy-then you have attained 'Ahaituki Bhakti'.

78. As long as our sense of 'ego' lasts, the feeling of 'me' and 'mine' will remain. We should think," I have my hands and feet and ears and eyes and intelligence and emotion, so why should I not do all the work myself'? Why trouble God?" This is a high state of devotion. It makes one active and alert.

79. Knowledge of the Vedas is another name of 'Bhakti'. In the Vedas God has been referred to as 'Rasamoya' (The One full of nectar), and Sri Krishna is the very embodiment of this 'Rasa'. The Scriptures (The Vedas) should be heard from a Bhakta (a devotee), so that its essential spirituality is not destroyed. A devotee can best understand and

appreciate the God of the Vedas, referred to as 'Rasamoya; so he can best explain the Vedas.

80. 'Gyan; or 'Knowledge' is like the hard covering of a coconut. Under the hard coconut shell is hidden the cool and tasty water of the coconut. Anyone wanting to taste that cool water will have to first crack the hard shell. Bhakti is like the cool water of the coconut lying within the hard shell of knowledge. Anyone who has the intellectual ability can take the path of 'Knowledge' (The Gyan Path). However, it is more difficult to attain Bhakti, it needs special ability, the ability to be like the sweet and soothing water of the coconut.

81. Previously I used to discuss the 'Shara Darshan'(The Six Visions related to the six points in our nervous system which the yogi works upon), bringing in the various arguments put forward by the learned holy men, the 'munees' and the 'rishis'. These discussions and other philosophical discourses left me agitated and I lost my peace of mind. Then one day I found a piece of paper on which was written a Sanskrit Sloka, in which the words "Ahang Bhaktaparadhina"(I depend on my Bhakta, my Devotee) I found this very intriguing. However, instead of believing in these

words completely, I wavered between doubt and faith. Then on another day in the middle of the night, after my prayer and meditation, I remembered these same words, "Ahang Bhaktaparadhina." Almost at the same instant Sri Krishna's words from the Gita came to my mind: "Na mey Bhakta pranashyati" (there is no end to or destruction of My Bhakta). A shiver of delight ran through my spine, tears of pure joy rolled down my cheeks. I felt a deep peace in my heart. All my doubts disappeared and I had a divine vision. I saw God standing before me. The dust below His footfall was so holy and pure that I fell on the dust and rolled on it to cover my body with the holy dust. From that day I have had complete and implicit faith in Bhakti.

82. Just as in the bright sunlight darkness disappears so also in the bright sunshine of Lord Gobinda's name all fear and hindrances disappear. While travelling on a lonely path, there may be bandits waiting to attack you, but they can do you no harm if you take the name of God. His name has the power to clear all dangers. That is why another name of God is 'BIGHNAVINASHANA' (Destroyer of all obstacles). Whenever you are faced with any obstruction or

danger, just repeat "Bighna vinashkari Hari" and all obstructions and dangers will disappear.

83. On the way to Lord Gobinda, Lord Gobinda Himself will be your guide. His devotees will be your companions. Even if you cannot see the Lord with your mortal eyes, you can see His devotees. What fear have you then? Proceed with a cheerful heart.
84. Divine mercy comes to us in two ways; 'Anukul Rupey' and 'Pratikul Rupey' that is, through Favorable Circumstances and through Unfavourable Circumstances. When it comes to us through favourable circumstances, both the devotee and the non-devotee feel happy.

When it comes through unfavorable circumstances, the non devotee is unhappy and upset and he complains of God's injustice. The devotee, on the other hand, recognizing it as God's mercy and is filled with joy and gratitude.

85. The true devotee understands the ways of God. Through suffering, trials and tribulations God is actually clearing the path of the devotee. It is His way of dispelling the results of the devotee's 'Karma', so that he can be drawn faster to His lotus feet. Without

this suffering, it would take many births for the devotee to find salvation. Hence, when a man is put through trials and suffering, it is actually God's mercy that is being showered on him.

86. However hungry we may be we eat only clean food and not poisonous food, however thirsty we may be we drink only clean water and not polluted water. Why should we then not take the clean path in life that leads to Lord Gobinda? It is the only path that gives true joy and peace.

87. In the scriptures it is always written, "God said.....", or "Lord Sri Krishna said"... "Shankara said to Parvati" etc. This is so because the writer himself may not be known to many and his authority may not be recognized, but God is recognized by all. Furthermore, every religion that has spread in this world is either spread by God Himself or by His representatives, the Prophets. So, all the religious texts of the world may be said to be, in reality, God's words. Hence it is not wrong to say "God said..."

88. God is living and awake. We can get His response even amidst our everyday activities, if we concentrate with devotion and faith. There are countless

situations in our lives when God's mercy has been clearly manifested but unfortunately we fail to notice them and fail to recognize them as God's grace.

89. First and foremost control your greed. Greed produces other evil tendencies. Anger is like straw set on fire. Straw catches fire instantly but the fire is also dowsed soon. Similarly, anger flares up instantly but if there is no greed behind it, it disappears hurting perhaps only one person in the process. Greed, however, has no end. Greed drives you from one want to another, there is no respite. Greed first lures you, and then follows the hunger of the senses leading to danger and ruin.
90. The place where the holy name of the Lord is taken becomes holy, like a pilgrimage. God Himself never leaves that place and saints, sages and holy spirits reside there. Good and wise souls love to live in such a place, but the non devotee avoids it and loves to live where there is only worldly talks.
91. Name of God as 'Bhakta batsala', meaning 'Protector of the Devotee' has become obsolete. Now He is known as 'Abhakta-batsala', meaning 'Protector of the Non-devotee'.

92. One who takes the holy name of 'Sri Hari' attains all the goodness of pilgrimages and scriptural readings. He has no need to visit holy places nor read ' holy books.
93. God Himself has said:"I am indebted to those who entertain Me with singing and dancing, in my name and in My presence."So singing and dancing in God's name, in front of Him to entertain Him, is a form of worship.
94. Engage in worldly activities but without any sense of the ego. Do all your work but know it to be God's work. Know God to be the Master and take care of your family, your household, your profession at His bidding. Be at His service all the time and carry out your daily activities as His orders. Think all your work to be Gods work.
95. If you perform all your worldly activities with the consciousness of God in your mind, you have the advantage of remembering God and doing your work, both at the same time.
96. Pray and meditate at the end of the day and at the end of the night.

97. If anyone follows the routine of praying and meditating twice daily and conducting all daily activities with God-consciousness, he develops a taste for the holy name of the Lord. Whether hearing, uttering or remembering the Name, it appeals to him as sweet as nectar. In this state the devotee is called 'Haribola'.

98. The man who has attained the state of 'Haribola' lives in this world by adopting one of these four Paths or Methods, called 'Britis'. These are;

i) 'Sati Britti'

ii) 'Chataki Britti'.

iii) 'Shishu Britti'

iv) 'Sharanapati Britti'

i) Sati Britti: 'Sati' is the devoted wife who loves her husband so much that she only goes where her husband is praised and avoids places where ill is spoken of him. The 'Hari Bola' believes that God is the Universal Husband and the Hari Bola himself is the loving wife separated from her beloved divine Husband. He, therefore, longs for a reunion with the

Lord, with the devotion, faithfulness and love that a 'Sati' has for her husband.

ii) Chataka Britti: Just as the 'Chataka'(a swallow) raises its face towards the sky and cries for rain water from the clouds, so also the 'Hari Bola' always looks towards God for His mercy and grace. The chataka will drink no other water except rain water falling from the clouds, so also the Haribola receives only from

God, and none else. Very devout 'sadhakas' reach this high state of devotion.

iii) Shishu Britti: A baby or a child knows none but his mother. Even when his mother is scolding him, he will cling to her and cry to her. Similarly the 'HariBola' with the simple faith and love of a child, depends only upon God and none else.

Iv) Sharanapati Britti: God is my only protector, He will protect me all the time and under all circumstances, with this belief surrendering to God with complete faith is; 'Sharanapati Britti'.

99. If you do not have the financial strength to arrange elaborate 'pujas', it does not matter. Worship God with the wonderful inner qualities that God has given

you. People set the altar on a golden, silver or wooden throne, make your heart the lotus throne of God. People offer the holy 'tulsi' leaves to God, offer your knowledge as the holy leaf. People offer fragrant flowers and incense, offer your sanctified behaviour instead. People use jewels to ornament God, use instead selflessness to ornament Him. Worship Him with the flower of kindness and garland Him with the continuous utterance of His holy Name.

100. Before you eat, first offer the food to God and then eat. Such offering purifies the food. Prahlad was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. His demon father, Hiranyakaashipu, offered him poisoned food, but since Prahlad first offered the food to his God Nara Hari, it was purified and nothing happened to him even though he ate it.

101. God has placed our heads right at the top of our bodies so that we can control all our mean and evil qualities with our heads. We should not bend our heads before any evil or wrong tendencies such as immorality, anger etc. God is above everything and our heads should be touching His lotus feet. Wherever you see the presence of great wealth, knowledge or spirit of sacrifice etc, know it to be

special manifestation of God. Bend your heads and pay homage. Do not ever lower your heads before any wrong or evil.

102. If you really want to make your mind peaceful and concentrated, then choose a quiet place and sit there alone. Sit in a fixed place, facing a fixed direction and choose a fixed timing. Gradually you will realise that the environment will not distract you any longer. The surrounding objects will become like the passing of the peaceful and eternal flow of the Ganga; they will not distract you at all. In this state, it will be easy for you to concentrate on God.

103. Just as when the sun rises, darkness disappears; when it rains the dust is washed away and the trees and plants look fresh and green; similarly when one hears about God and remembers Him, all the dust and darkness of the devotee's mind is cleared. His heart is purified and it is filled with joy and peace. His face shines with beauty and his words become sweet as nectar.

104. The mind can be compared to a tiger. The tiger lives in a forest and the mind resides in the forest of worldliness. The tiger attacks and kills many innocent

and timid creatures. The mind similarly attacks our good qualities such as kindness, affection, friendliness etc, with aggressive claws of cruelty, jealousy, selfishness and narrow-mindedness. It is extremely difficult to control the mind because it is so much like a ferocious and attacking tiger. That is why it is said that, one who can control and conquer his own mind can conquer the whole world.

105. Have faith in the words of a holy man, your 'guru' and in the Scriptures.

106. In order to understand and appreciate all the stories and incidents narrated in the Scriptures, one has to attain a high state of spirituality. In the Hindu Shashtra there is a word "Ashta Siddhi", it means Eightfold Success. The eight modes of success are: 'Anima,' 'Laghima,' 'Mahima', 'Prapti', 'Prakamya', 'Bashistva,' 'Ishittva, and', 'Jatrakama'. Any one who has crossed these stages with success, can travel effortlessly in the sky, in air, or on water. Sree Hanumanji had attained 'Ashta Siddhi' and so he could travel through the air and therefore easily crossed the ocean by travelling through air and reached Sri Lanka. This is true, but if you want any proof, you have to reach a high state of spirituality. However, even if you cannot

comprehend such a state, it does not matter. Appreciate the qualities of love, devotion and knowledge that you find in Sree Hanumanji.

107. Those religions that say that God is only abstract, they are limiting Him and His power. They have not realized that God is Infinity, the infinite power of God. If God cannot take a concrete form but remains confined only in the abstract, then where is His godliness? Hindu's God is not only abstract, He is concrete, abstract, crude, fine, large, terrifying and has so many attributes that it is impossible for any human imagination to conceive them all. The way religion has developed in India and the way Indians have realized God ('Brahma'), no where else in the world has such development and such realization taken place.

108. You have been given two eyes: engage one eye to look at and appreciate the world, and the beauty of our mother earth; engage the other eye to look at and appreciate God's devotees and the beauty of God residing in the heart of every creature.

.....Hari Om Tat Sat.....

Thus Spake Maharshi Nagendranath (Bhaduri Mahasay)

✪ God is.

✪ Be Good and Do Good.

✪ Be God and make God.

✪ God makes man after His own image.

✪ Oh God! Save my soul.

✪ Praying is not commanding. Praying is begging.

✪ I and My father are one—Jesus. (Ayamatma Brahman
—Veda)

✪ Call should be sincere with Heart within and God
overhead.

✪ Be free thinker.

✪ What the heart thinketh, the mouth speaketh and
hence the face is the reflector or living mirror of thoughts.

✪ Sitting, Postures help the concentration.

✿ Delay is dangerous.

✿ One can not please everybody.

✿ The most distressed are nearer to God.

✿ The only attempt is your reward and a habit will be formed and that will be helpful to you in your Search.

✿ God gives us all good if we want to be good, God denies us all good if we like to be bad.

✿ Faith is to be acquired and established through Reasoning, but there is a limit beyond where Reason cannot go. Where Faith is implicit Reason is needless.

✿ Faith is the mother of all as Goddess Durga.

✿ Christ says, follow me and I will lead you to heaven. Don't say 'why' only blindly follow my order and you will be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

✿ Father, I come here as a drop of rain from Heaven, Lord give me thy such grace as I may mix with the ocean.

✿ Faith is the part and parcel of true religion. It requires no demonstration. The deeper the faith in Him, the

greater the experience of His blessings. Our faith should be established by the grace of Gurudev to whom we can go direct. We must have recourse to him through our Guru—in the real sense of the term.

❧ Oh Lord! You are to order and I am to carry out that without murmur. There is nothing to why?

10 STORIES AS TOLD BY MAHARSHI NAGENDRANATH

"His striking parables were expressed in flawless Bengali." **Paramahansa Yogananda.**

While preaching to his devotees Maharshi Nagendranath often told them stories, mostly taken from the Hindu Scriptures and popular tales. His narrative style and the warmth of his voice lend freshness to his narratives. The moral and the spiritual content of his teachings are well brought out through these stories. The stories also introduce a note of traditional values and provide a view of contemporary culture. Here are the translations of a few stories the Maharshi told his devotees, to illustrate certain moral and spiritual points and also to make his teaching interesting. These stories are all from his Upodeshamrita Volume 1.

STORY 1

There was once a class of sailors who had no fear of drowning in rivers or in seas. To them these were like little pools. They were only afraid of the great oceans. One of their brothers, however, was drowned in a river. When the sailor heard of his brother's death after returning home, this is how he lamented: "Oh brother, it is no matter that you have died but why did you have to die by drowning in a river? 'If you had to drown, why could you not drown in a vast ocean? With your death you have now put our entire family into shame!"

In a similar manner when a devotee sees an ordinary man steeped in worldliness, he cries:"Oh Brother why have you drowned yourself in worldliness? Why could you not drown yourself in the great ocean of divine love and bliss?"

STORY 2

One day when a thief went to a Brahmin's house to steal, he overheard the wife telling her husband, "Why don't you ask God for some wealth?"The husband replied,"For

the last seven days God has been telling me that at the crossroad, under the banyan tree four pots of gold coins are buried. However, I do not want that gold, because if I possess that wealth, I might lose the wealth of my devotion to God." Hearing this, the thief proceeded towards the banyan tree and dug out the pots. However, before he opened the pots, he heard the hissing of poisonous snakes coming from within the pots. He was first disappointed and sad, then a mischievous idea struck him. He took the pots to the Brahmin's house and left them there, hoping the snakes would bite the couple and kill them. He would then enter their house and steal all their belongings. The Brahmin couple however did not die as the thief had planned because they found gold and not snakes inside the pots.

The Moral: To the man with an evil mind and evil intentions everything appears as its opposite. Where the Brahmin's wife heard the jingle of gold coins, the thief heard the hissing of snakes. The very touch of the unholy person turned gold into poisonous snakes.

STORY 3

In four caves in the district of Gaya, four holy men lived. They belonged to four different religions. One was a Hindu, the second was a Muslim, the third was a Christian and the fourth was a Buddhist. They never saw each other, neither did they ever speak to each other. Years later when they all reached salvation, the end of their religious paths, they found that they had all arrived at the same place. Then they became friends and started living in the same cave.

The Moral: The story illustrates that only those who have not reached the final stage in their spiritual journey quarrel over the differences in religions. Those who have arrived at their destination realize that all religions arrive at same goal.

STORY 4

Early one morning a guru and his disciple were on their way to river Narmada to take a dip in the holy water. They found a lump of gold lying in the path. The disciple went to pick it up but his guru warned him;"Don't touch it! If you touch it, you will die."The disciple obeyed his guru,

but it was clear that he was not happy with the guru's order. Noticing his disciple's displeasure, the guru made him wait by the roadside for some time. After a while two travelers came, picked up the gold and decided to divide it equally between the two of them. They planned to buy a saw with which they would try to cut the piece and so they set out for the market. On the way both were overcome by greed and each planned to murder the other. One planned to kill his companion by drowning him and the other planned to murder his companion by poisoning him. After buying the saw they returned and went to bathe in the river. While bathing, one of them hit the other on the head and killed him. Then he went and had his food and died because the food was poisoned by his friend, unknown to him. The guru then showed his disciple the two dead bodies, one floating in the river and the other lying under the tree and told him, "chunio to munio", "If you touch it you die."

STORY 5

One day a hunter was chasing a pig in the forest. The pig ran and took shelter in a nearby 'ashram' of a rishi. Soon the hunter came to the ashram and asked the rishi if he

knew where the pig was. The rishi realized that if he spoke the truth the pig's life would be in danger, so he said, "I do not know."

One day a dacoit was running away with the good and faithful wife of a man. Somehow she managed to run away from him and entered a village of farmers. She took shelter in a Brahmin's house. Soon the dacoit came to the Brahmin's house in search of the woman and asked the Brahmin if he had seen a woman. The Brahmin considering himself to be a truthful man, told the dacoit the truth, that is, the woman was hiding in his house. Instantly the dacoit caught the woman again and was about to take her away when the villagers came and rescued her.

The moral of these two stories is that, being truthful has deeper implication than merely speaking the truth. We have to note that while the rishi's lies saved the life of the pig, the Brahmin's words of truth was about to ruin the innocent woman. sometimes truth produces harmful results and untruth produces good results. The speaker has to be conscious of the result his words will produce, and then he should speak. The 'shastras' i.e the scriptures say that 'truth' must express the central idea

and must definitely be beneficial. Truth should always try to please God. If one's truthful words harm some one who is innocent, then the speaker is not being truthful.

"Sattyang vyakti, sarong vyakti, hitang vyakti punah punah

Asare khalu sangsarey saremeba Hari pujanam"

STORY 6

There was once a court scholar who was very intelligent and though well versed in the scriptures did not lead his life according to the teachings of these holy texts. However, because of his intelligence and experience, the king took his advice on all occasions. Under the patronage of the king, the scholar lived happily with his wife and their only son. The son however hardly stayed at home, he came there only for his meals and spent most of his time in the company of a holy man who lived in a nearby forest. The scholar was so busy trying to please his king that he had no time to inquire about his son's whereabouts. Influenced by the holy man, the son was drawn towards God, and now he spent most of his time thinking about God.

One day the king called the scholar and gave him a very strict order. He said, "Raja Parikshit had attained salvation when he heard from Sukhdev the Bhagabat. It took him only seven days. I am giving you one month's time to free me from all bondage so that I can attain salvation. If you cannot do that, I shall forfeit your wealth and sentence you all to death." This order left the scholar extremely worried and he could now neither eat nor sleep and his tension increased day by day. Then one day, by chance, the family sat together for a meal. Usually the son would have his meals separately and hardly met his father. On this day he noticed that his father was looking very depressed and so he asked the reason. The scholar was reluctant to give a reply because he took his son to be a good for nothing. The mother, however, told him the whole problem. The son was not perturbed at all and told his father calmly. "Father, do not worry. Ask the king to accept me as his guru and to follow my instructions word by word." The father thought that the son was perhaps thinking of some trick to

save them, so he went to the king and told him about his son's proposal.

The king agreed and the next day the scholar went to the court with his son. Eager to be free from all bondage, the king received the scholar's son as his guru and sat at his feet, waiting for the instructions. The court was crowded and all eyes were on the king and his guru. To the surprise of all, the scholar's son asked the king to bring a very strong rope. The scholar became very agitated, wondering what foolishness his good for nothing son was up to. He was afraid, and thought would his son tie up someone with the rope, suppose he ties up the king himself? Just then the son gave the order, "Tie up the king, bind him to the pillar." The king agreed to be tied up and bound, so he was tied and bound to the pillar. Next the son ordered his father to be tied up and bound to another pillar. So the scholar too was tied and bound. Now the scholar became very angry with his son and was cursing him under his breath and planning all sorts of severe punishment when his son instructed him, "Now, father, untie the king." The scholar became furious and cried in exasperation, "You fool! Do you not see that I am bound? Can a man who is himself tied up, untie the bindings of another man? Don't you understand that it is an impossible task?"

The king then said in a quiet and respectful voice addressing his young guru, "I understand, my Master. One who is himself tied up in worldly affairs, bound by 'maya' cannot possibly free another man who is similarly tied up and bound. Those who have given up worldliness and gone beyond the world of maya, who have attained freedom, they alone can set another man free. They alone can break the bondage of others."

STORY 7

Once when Indra saw that all the gods and all men were worshipping him, he became very proud. In order to destroy his pride, Sri Hari assumed the form of a young Brahmin boy and arrived at the court of Indra. Though Indra did not receive the boy himself, he made good arrangements for his reception. Then he asked the boy the reason for his coming to the court. The boy said that in the past he had seen many Indras and had now come to see the present one. Indra was surprised at this reply and wondered how that could be possible. The boy was so young, at this young age how could he have seen all those Indras of the past. What could really be the age of the boy? When Indra was wondering thus, a line of ants

was seen on the throne where Indra was seated. On noticing the ants, Indra ordered his attendants to throw down the ants. "Oh No, No," cried the boy, "Each of these little ants was an Indra in its previous birth, but because of their unworthy 'karmas' in their past lives, in this life they all have the bodies of ants." Indra was shocked. How was it possible that the Indras with their high status and qualifications could be thus reduced to mere ants? His pride of being an Indra was destroyed, his ego was crushed.

The moral of the story is that, a man's ego which is at the root of his pride, does not allow him to see the truth. The truth is that no one really has anything to be proud of, because no one really has any power. All energy and all power come from God alone. Also, one should always try and perform good 'karmas'.

STORY 8

A rich merchant was acquainted with the 'mohanto' of a wealthy 'math'(The head of a monastery). Occasionally he would visit the math and listen to the spiritual talks of the mohanto. He would however, wonder if there was any difference between himself and the mohanto. Both

possessed land, wealth and jewels; so he concluded that both were worldly persons. One day he went up to the mohanto and told him, "Do not assume such a dignified attitude. There is no difference between you and me, I have wealth and so have you. After all, we are both worldly minded." The mohanto smiled and replied, "One day you will realize the difference."

Days passed and then one day the merchant sent one of his men to a foreign land to purchase and bring home some goods. However, soon news came that all the money was finished in buying the goods and no money was left for shipment. Money had to be sent immediately but the merchant had no more money with him. He went to the mohanto to borrow some money from him. The mohanto readily lent him Rs. 5000. The merchant offered him 50 percent of the profit and the profit, he assured the mohanto, would not be less than Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20,000. The merchant sent the money and after a few days the happy news came that the ship was coming with the goods. However, three days later news came, "The ship has sunk." The merchant was beside himself with grief. He ran to the mohanto and cried anxiously, "Oh what a mishap has fallen upon me! The ship has sunk!" The mohanto just looked up at the sky once and

said quietly, " If it is the will of God, be it so."The merchant was furious at this calm response and shouted angrily, "There, you have no worries! Even if you lose everything, it is nothing to you; you can very well live in your loin cloth! I cannot do that!"He then went away a sad and angry man and then on he spent his days in misery; neither being able to sleep nor eat. However, soon after this again news came "Our ship has not sunk. It was another ship."Dancing with joy the merchant ran to the mohanto and told him, "Maharaj, the ship has not sunk. It was another ship!" The mohanto said in a quiet voice, "It is the will of God that the ship has not sunk." He then added, again in a quiet voice, "See now the difference between you and me?"

Moral of the story:

This is the difference between a wealthy sannyasi and an ordinary wealthy man. The sannyasi does not have any 'attachment' to his wealth but the worldly man has a strong attachment. Even a man living an ordinary family life can be like a sannyasi if he learns to free himself from this sense of attachment and is ready to spend his wealth for a good cause.

STORY 9

One day when a king and his minister were taking a stroll on the terrace of the king's palace, a Muslim Fakir was crying on the road below, "If God gives, I shall receive"(Maula dei to mil jai). Hearing the cry, the king told his minister, "I am the king of this land, I provide for everyone. Look at this fakir. Instead of taking my name he is begging from God. Does he know who this God is, where He lives? Instruct the treasury not to give anything to this man." After sometime another beggar was passing who cried, "Raja dei to mil jai."(If the king gives, I shall receive.)

The king was pleased to hear his praise and instructed his minister to see to it that the beggar be given a golden coin. He further instructed the minister to hide the coin inside a watermelon. The beggar received the watermelon and the hidden coin and praising the king, he departed happily.

At the end of the day the tired fakir sat under a tree. He was wondering what had gone wrong and was thus addressing God, "Oh my Friend, are you angry with me? I have begged in your name the whole day but I have received nothing. Have I done something wrong or else

why are you displeased with me? This has never happened to me before. However, even if I have to give up my life, I shall not give up your name, which is far more dear to me than life itself." At that time the other beggar, seeing the fakir alone came to him. Noticing that the visitor was a beggar, the fakir asked him, "To beg, how much did you travel today?"

The other beggar: "Today I did not have to travel much. Soon after I set out, I received this watermelon from the king's palace. What have you received today?"

Fakir: "I have received no alms today, though I have been walking the whole day. Today my Friend has given me nothing."

Other beggar: "Look here, how much you may cry in the name of God, nothing will happen. Since we receive help directly from human beings, we have to go to them. Did you go and beg from any human being today?"

Fakir: "I have so long never begged from any human being, because I know that every man, be he a badshah or a fakir, begs from God. So what is the use of begging from a beggar? The one who provides all the basic amenities of life such as water, air and fire without any price - I beg only from Him."

Other beggar: "You are in a delusion. Man's sorrow can only be understood by a man. To mitigate the suffering of human life, men have built roads, ponds, hospitals, etc. God has done nothing. Why should you then not go to any man for help?"

Fakir: "You are shortsighted. Remember behind all philanthropic work, there is the hand of God. This world is like a huge machinery with many parts and each of the rajas, badshahs and nawabs are like parts of that huge machine. God is the operator and with his inspiration the rajas and nababs do all the work."

Other beggar: "See now the direct proof of what I say. Because you have begged in the name of God, now you have no food to eat and see what I have received. Seeing you hungry I feel sorry. Take the watermelon. Take the whole fruit, I don't need any part of it because I am not fond of watermelons." The beggar gave the watermelon and went away. With tears in his eyes, the fakir thanked God for his kindness. He said: "Oh my Friend, seeing me hungry, you have sent this fruit through a human being. There is no end to your kindness." After washing himself and praying, he ate the fruit. Near the end of his meal, he noticed the gold coin,

but he could hardly believe his eyes. However, after he was sure, he thanked God a second time: "Oh my Friend you have not only sent me food but also gold! Instead of showering me a non-believer, with your kindness if you had given this watermelon and gold to a true devotee, he would have rightly realized your goodness and spread your name."

The moral: If we pay attention, we will realize that God's grace is being showered on us continuously. Everyone receives this grace but only the true devotee takes notice of it.

Note: The story shows the broad mindedness of Maharshi Nagendranath because here the Muslim fakir is shown as a great devotee.

STORY 10

One evening a man was standing by the river, waiting to cross over to the other side. At that time a sadhu was passing by after his evening bath in the river. The sadhu noticed the lone figure by the river side asked him. "Why are you standing here? Do you want something?" The

stranger replied, "I am looking for a boat because I have to go to the other side."

The Sadhu: You will not get any boat today. All the boat men have gone away because the river becomes dangerous as a thunder storm breaks out almost every evening, in this season. No boats will ply this night. If you want, you can stay in my 'asram' to night and early tomorrow morning you can take a boat. My asram is nearby, you are welcome.

Hearing this, the stranger was almost in tears and in desperation wanted to go and search for a boat man then and there. Then he told the sadhu: "My mother is very ill. I must reach home tonight." The sadhu felt sorry for the man and told him: "You can easily cross the river. Chant this mantra as you enter the river and the water will dry up. The mantra is a very simple one, 'Sri Ramachandraya Nomo'."

As the man entered the river the water almost reached up to his knees. He quickly rolled up his dhoti above his knees to prevent it from getting wet.

As he went deeper, the level of the water rose higher and he rolled up his dhoti a little higher too. There was no sign of the level of the water going down, though he kept

chanting the mantra all the time. Disappointed, he returned to the sadhu and told him everything. The sadhu rebuked him saying, "You did not chant the mantra with full faith. If you had faith in the divine power of the mantra, you would not have rolled up your dhoti. If you were confident that the river would dry up, you would not have feared that your dhoti would get wet. The mantra will not work if you have such doubt in your mind. Why can a man not walk on water if he has faith in the holy name of RAMA? It is said that even huge and heavy stones with the holy name 'RAMA' written on it with full faith, float on water." Reprimanding the stranger thus, the sadhu invited the man to follow him to the river.

The sadhu entered the river and the man followed him. As they went, the sadhu chanted the mantra loudly and confidently and the water dried up. After they both reached the other side safely, the river was filled with water again.

The Author

Professor Jaba Chatterjee was born on 22nd June, 1949 and died on 4th November, 2014. She had a brilliant educational career. She was first admitted to Don Hill School, Darjeeling and then to Pratt Memorial School, Kolkata. After completion of +2 level of her education she join Lady Brabourne College as a student of English (Hons.). She obtained her B.A. Degree with English Honours in 1970. She did her M.A. Degree in English from Calcutta University in 1972. She join Seth Anandaram Jaipuria College, Kolkata in the year 1983 as a lecturer in English and retired from her service as Reader and Head of the Department of English in the year 2009. She was very much religious and was connected to different religious organizations and wrote many religious/ spiritual articles in English and Bengali in various periodicals and journals. Her two booklets viz. Life and Teachings of Maharshi Nagendra Nath and 108 messages from Maharshi Nagendra Nath earned much reputation. She was very much helpful to poor and downtrodden students. May her soul live in heavenly peace.

This text is an edited copy of the original document that appears on the cover page, written by Professor Jaba Chatterjee.

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May God pour upon you all His light, the light that dwells within you.