

“The background of spirituality is the “Moral Courage” which rises when one is moral”

Sri. K.C.Narayana

1. This statement of the Master is from his talk on “Methods of Training” delivered during a preceptor’s conference in 1970. He states that “The background of spirituality is the “Moral Courage” which rises when one is moral. My revered master used to say “How so ever advanced a person may seem to be, if his moral character is doubtful, I would say that he has not got even a breath of spirituality”. And what is morality in the True Sense? It is that all the faculties may come in harmony for proper use. How does this happen? When a man begins to be away from the “Self”, it begins to develop. So all the methods given in any religion are only for

this end, and the methods and procedure of Natural Path are very easy for it. With the overemphasis on “Self” morality decays. But it is the part to be played by the preceptors alone that the self be turned to Divinity.”

2. We find the Master raising more than one point here. He states clearly that spirituality has no meaning if a person is not moral. He states that morality develops when one is away from the “Self”. He further states that morality means that the faculties are in harmony for the proper use. Moral courage is a product of being moral. This approach is refreshingly new in the area of ethics. We are accustomed to think that the fundamental question of ethics is, “What should I do?” or “How should I act?” Ethics is supposed to provide us with “moral principles” or universal rules that tell us what to do. Many people who passionately adhere to the moral principle of utilitarianism feel

that everyone is obligated to do whatever will achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. Others who are devoted to the basic principles feel that everyone is obligated to act only in ways that respect the human dignity and moral rights of all persons.

3. Moral principles like these focus primarily on people's actions and doings. We apply them by asking what these principles require of us in particular situations whether to lie, hide, cheat, betray, steal or to commit suicide or homicide. Also we apply these principles while deciding whether we should forgive, help, share and love. We also apply them when we ask what they require of us as professionals, e.g., lawyers, doctors, or business people, or what they require of our social policies and institutions.

4. I am aware of many aspirants looking at the “Ten Commandments” of the Master in similar fashion. It was attempted in “Imperience Beckons” to clarify that the purpose of that monumental work in spiritual history is not meant for such consideration though such an application cannot be ruled out. But the point to consider is “are moral principles all that ethics consists of?” It is clear that this emphasis on moral principles smacks of a thoughtless and slavish worship of rules, as if the moral life was a matter of scrupulously checking our every action against a table of do’s and don’ts. Fortunately, this obsession with principles and rules has been recently challenged by several ethicists who argue that the emphasis on principles ignores a fundamental component of ethics namely, virtue. These ethicists point out that by focusing on what people should do or how

people should act, the “moral principles approach” neglects the more important issue of what people should be. In other words, the fundamental question of ethics is not “What should I do?” but “What kind of person should I be?”

5. It is here we find the Master making the position very clear to us when he stated “what is morality in the True Sense? It is that all the faculties may come in harmony for proper use. How does this happen? When a man begins to be away from the “Self”, it begins to develop.” The message is clear that we have to be out of the rings of “Self” or boundaries of “Self” that we have created for ourselves. Once we achieve this, we gain courage to face any situation in life and stand up to the higher values of life.
6. We know that there are mainly three limitations or boundaries covering our self as

stated by the Master namely the physical, astral and causal. We also know that we may understand ourselves better when we understand the limitations caused by the five Kosas stated by the Upanishads. Master has also given us a version of 23 boundaries or circles which cover our self. From the letters and conversations with the aspirants in the path I have come to understand the boundaries or limitations we have can be looked as consisting of broadly seven types of boundaries:

a. Body Boundary:

This boundary demands us to decide, what we need to do to protect our body, what physical limitations might we need to recognize, what standards need to be in place to protect our physical health etc., It could be that a certain minimum amount of exercise or a maximum amount of food or

drink is required to sustain the boundary at the optimum level.

b. Energy Boundary:

Energy boundary obviously protects the amount of physical and emotional energy we have to operate from. We need to consider what energy drains in our life need to be eliminated or minimized. We need to address to the problem of which energy refuelers must be present to help maintain the energy we need for our life.

c. Boundary of Time:

Time is a precious commodity. Without the proper time boundaries, we lose something we can never get back. We therefore should understand what non-negotiable boundaries must be in place to protect our time. We have to be clear about the maximum amount of time we will spend on a particular activity, at a specific event, or engaging in work.

Time management I find is the main problem of many aspirants and efficient time management demands a clear cut understanding of the priorities in life. What type of life we want to live dictates the priorities in life and consequently that determines the management of our time.

d. Boundary of Space:

Our space includes any environment in which we spend our time. We need to protect our spaces so that they nourish us and enable us to live our lives optimally. We need to pay attention to our needs and organise our environment to suit the purposes of our activities. We have to be clear about the optimum use of our environments.

e. Money Boundary:

We need money to survive in this life. Our money boundaries protect our finances. We have to be clear about the limits we need to

set on spending and saving. We need to understand clearly about the minimum earning we should have and work towards getting it keeping in view the priorities of life and the time management. In many cases the aspirants are some how caught in this web and this boundary is the toughest one the aspirants generally have. This boundary has the maximum influence from other members in the family and sagacity requirement to solve the problems is very high.

f. Relationship Boundary:

We should be clear about the boundaries to protect our relationships. Our relationships are truly our greatest gift in life. This boundary has a heavy influence on the space and time management in our lives. We need to decide how much time we need to spend to nurture our relationship

optimally. The aspirants have the problem in this boundary according to their level of advancement in spiritual life. Many times we unintentionally hurt others giving an overriding priority to our vairagya. As a piece of advice I can suggest that we should all emulate our beloved Master who maintained excellent relationship with all members of the family and friends. Clarity about these and many more aspects of this boundary helps ensure our relationships remain healthy.

g. Self-Esteem Boundary:

Self-esteem boundary protects our sense of worth. These boundaries help us feel good about ourselves. We should know the minimum we need to do to maintain our self-respect. We need to follow through on our promises and maintain honesty in our life. We are to be clear about the limits we need

to set with ourself and other people to make sure our self-esteem is not compromised.

7. As stated earlier these aspects of limitations may also be considered as a different version of the boundaries of Kosas that enwrap our psyche. When we determine to be out of these rings we have necessarily to meet many situations when we find that we are in states of conflict and confrontation. Unless there is a definite inclination to realise our true nature and an undeterred determination we will be facing an uphill task. The moral courage required for getting clear off the various limitations mentioned above is got only by practicing the morals in the path. While the aspirant does his best the Master says that it is the preceptors who have to help them. To quote again "And what is morality in the True Sense? It is that all the faculties may come in harmony for proper use. How does this happen? When a man

begins to be away from the “Self”, it begins to develop. So all the methods given in any religion are only for this end, and the methods and procedure of Natural Path are very easy for it. With the overemphasis on “Self” morality decays. But it is the part to be played by the preceptors alone that the self be turned to Divinity”. The turning of the aspirants’ thought force from the lower portion of the heart to the higher and then towards the Atma chakra thus may be seen is a practice that enables the aspirant mould his life according to moral values of piety and love.

8. In this connection it would be appropriate to remember what the Master has stated regarding the problem of the thoughts we entertain. Master stated that “We do not properly understand what effect our activities in the world produce upon the atmosphere of the Godly region. When joined with the inner

feelings of the heart our activities create impressions in the cosmos, and they affect the human mind. They grow more and more powerful by the action of the cosmic energy; and the hearts of the people, when hit by them, take in their effect and begin to produce thoughts and more thoughts. In this way we have been spoiling the cosmos ever since our birth. That is the reason why we are never without a thought even for a moment. But those who rise above the cosmos can no doubt become almost thoughtless. When a man goes on with his usual work, of whatever nature it might be, in the sense of duty having no weight or impression of it upon his heart, he spoils neither himself nor the cosmos. That is why Lord Krishna has insisted so much upon the recognition of the true sense of duty.” It naturally becomes our duty to go beyond our petty selves and move into the cosmic

realms of existence. We in the Natural Path know that there are certain ideals, such as excellence in thought and deed and dedication to the Universal good, toward which we should strive and which allow the full enfoldment of our humanity and hopefully of divinity. These ideals are discovered through thoughtful reflection on the potential we have as human beings.

9. We need to develop Virtues. Virtues are attitudes, dispositions, or character traits that enable us to be and to act in ways that develop this potential. They enable us to pursue the ideals we have adopted. A person of wisdom should be truthful, without arrogance, without deceit, not slanderous and not hateful. The wise person should go beyond the evil of greed and miserliness. Honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, fidelity, integrity; fairness, self-control, and prudence are all examples of virtues. Virtues

are developed through learning and through practice. As Lord Krishna stated a person can improve his or her character by practicing self-discipline, while a good character can be corrupted by repeated self-indulgence. Just as the ability to run a marathon develops through much training and practice, so too does our capacity to be fair, to be courageous, or to be compassionate. Virtues are habits. That is, once they are acquired, they become characteristic of a person. For example, a person who has developed the virtue of generosity is often referred to as a generous person because he or she tends to be generous in all circumstances.

10. Moreover, a person who has developed virtues will be naturally disposed to act in ways that are consistent with moral principles. The virtuous person is the ethical person. He is the person who can face

ridicule, repression and reverence with equanimity because he is an embodiment of moral courage. At the heart of this issue is the idea of “community” which we call “Satsang”. A person’s character traits are not developed in isolation, but within and by the communities to which he or she belongs. As people grow and mature, their personalities are deeply affected by the values that their communities prize, by the personality traits that their communities encourage, and by the role models that their communities put forth for imitation. This is what Master was stating when he stated that “So all the methods given in any religion are only for this end, and the methods and procedure of Natural Path are very easy for it.” The paramount importance of Satsangh and attending the congregations we have is clear from this perspective. Those who think they can cultivate virtuous and pious life on their

own without the help of the Satsangh would be committing a blunder.

11. The moral life, then, is not simply a matter of following moral rules and of learning to apply them to specific situations. The moral life is also a matter of trying to determine the kind of people we should be and of attending to the development of character within our communities and ourselves. The practice of these morals alone grants us moral courage. It requires moral courage to be in Satyapad marg. It is likely that our stance may be understood as cult indoctrination and we may be required to be more secular, that is move with persons and communities other than our cherished path. The question of being moral and at the same being secular is another important dimension of the problem.

12. As Dr. K.C.Varadachari said “Far deeper than any social, economic, political readjustment, mankind is in dire need of a readjustment on the spiritual plane. What is needed is then the rediscovery of our roots. Secularism may be a stop-gap arrangement in the present moment, it is however never to be something that rules out all spiritual values from the ordinary life of man. The present crisis in the world or rather series of crises, are all due to the purely secular pursuits, whether humanistic or scientific or materialistic, all these ignore the spiritual yearning of man for growth and higher knowledge. There is a spiritual essence which is operating in all manifestations of life in the universe, human or animal, plant and mineral. A spiritual reconstruction of mankind alone can save mankind from self-annihilation.” The purpose of moral living is to live a spiritual life where there is no or little

consideration for the Self. Dr. K.C.Varadachari says that “Our spiritual education alone can rectify the situation and make real peace possible in this world. It is agreed that peace is indivisible, and so one should promote peace all round and at every point of life. Individuals as well as communities and nations have to learn the bitter lesson that the inordinate pursuit of power through science will tend to reduce men to the level of monsters. Education is thus central to our entire development and basic as a programme for peace. But here again what type of education should we encourage. It is to be integral; the secular must be subordinated to the spiritual and the spiritual must be made to express itself through the secular; thus the conflict between the secular and the spiritual should be resolved not by merely limiting the domains of each but by permeating the one

by the other. Secularism has a tendency to divide and separate man from man but the spiritual tends to unite the divided not by annulling the same but by integration.”

13. It is argued by some well meaning persons that most of our activities of life are based on moral or immoral considerations of motives while in spiritual activity all motives are eliminated. This is one of the methods of interpreting Nishkam Karma. It is further stated that the person who is most confused is the one who tries to compartmentalise good and bad in the mental plane because violence and non violence cannot remain in two compartments of the mind. Also love and hate cannot remain side by side in ones' consciousness. In a person where love is the dominating factor, hate vanishes both outwardly and inwardly. It is further argued that in spirituality where there is the infusion of Ultimate Prana at regular intervals

(Pranahuti) there is no need to spend ones' time cultivating moral virtues as it is a motivated activity.

14. Such a trend of thinking was available amongst some of the persons pursuing the path of Raja Yoga of Sri Ramchandra, at particular point of time and many persons were not serious to follow the injunctions of the Commandments of the Master. Master lamented over this plight in his article 'They have lost the Ocean.' Master has stated that "In the sphere of Spirituality, Character development has a special place, the importance of which is in no way less than that of Spiritual Welfare itself. Our Revered Lalaji Maharaj always laid emphasis on the special importance of character in the area of spiritual development. In one place he has written 'I tell every human being, every seeker from the very beginning try his best to maintain and improve the condition of his

personal character. No word should leave the mouth which is likely to be objectionable to anyone. Nor should any such act be indulged in as likely to be unpleasant to others. I am not as much a lover of spirituality as of character. If a seeker has achieved the Dhruv Padh but character weakness still exists in him, my understanding is that he has not understood the True Philosophy.”

15. Master stated that “My heart is filled to the brim with love for my associates. Whatever service I am able to render to them, all that does not give me satisfaction. My heart is ever intent and keen to ensure that the largest part of them should achieve atleast my own spiritual condition in the shortest possible period of time. In order to expedite this and to ensure the message reaching the largest number quickly and in good measure, I appointed a large number

of preceptors to do the job of awakening the public so that their work can be done, and their character, conduct and behaviour can be remodelled and straitened out.” Thus we see the main purpose of the Master’s path is to awaken the public and help them in development of character and conduct and high standard of morals.

16. When the bridge between morals and spirituality is destroyed we find the aspirants develop odd traits of behaviour. Master says “Then the bondage of egoism came in and got firmly established and people started thinking very highly of themselves though they were not so in truth. Ideas similar to this began to arise in some of our preceptors; and the disease is spreading instead of dying down. Endowing them with power has become risky for me. Power exists for achieving the Divine and for benefiting others; but in such persons it started

inducing intentions of selfish profit.” “ This alone can be said about them that they have strayed away from the path; and to bring them back to the path has become near impossible due to their having gone away from their dharma their duty.” Where moral character deteriorates and Dharma suffers there can be no spirituality worth its name. It is absolutely necessary that the surrender to the Master and his method as also the Satsang is fully practiced to remain with courage in the path.

17. As already hinted above there are two basic kinds of moral judgments. The first one relates to duties and obligations to be performed. For example: we should speak truth, we should align ourselves with the cosmic spirit, and we should feel our camaraderie. etc., These judgments often uphold minimal standards of conduct and assert or imply a moral ‘ought.’ The second

kind of judgment focuses on human excellence and the nature of the good life. These judgments are aimed at promoting in the most general terms happiness, excellence, universal good etc., It is obvious that happiness requires activity and not mere consumption and good life includes friendship, maintaining intellectual and physical health. These appear to be the general moral judgements. The particular ethical judgements would be examples of these two. It is to be noted that these two types of judgements are to be distinguished separately and should not be confused one with the other.

18. Ancient seers have always maintained the first type of morals as primary as we find in Manu Dharma and other neeti Sastras. The moral principles advocated aim at absolute good. That is they are Virtue Oriented. Similarly Aristotle's central

question was 'What is the good life for a human being?' In contrast for Kautilya (Chanakya) morals are dictated by the society and the duty of a person to fellow beings and the State for example Kautilya's Artha Sastra. This position is what characterises the theory of Kant also. (Critique of Practical Reason). Social good has been ruling till recently the thinking of philosophers but there appears to be trend to take the question of what is the good life, and how can I go about living it? In reasserting the importance of the realm of judgments concerning our flourishing, excellence and happiness, the ancient thinking on morality reclaims for us this neglected half of our ethical lives for intelligent, philosophical consideration.

19. Morality and moral values appear at first glance to be equivalent expressions. Both go back to a Latin term from which we derive

the word “mores”, which means customs or usages. In other words, morality should be seen originally to have been an extrapolation from the customs which are passed down through the generations in a society. For the individual the outputs of moral values are action in the service of others, or support for such action, and living a life that we would like to see emulated by others in what we would then imagine to be a better world. The moral person lives in terms of his or her emotions and needs unless and until this interferes with the rights and interests of others. The four essential value clusters for the moral society are freedom, empathy, truth, and contribution. All are crosscut by and interrelated by a sense of balance. No value, no concept exists that is not worthless or worse when it is treated autonomously or when it is out of balance with others on the same plane.

20. The most basic of all moral values is truth, for only when we value truth will be able to evaluate what the other values actually mean. Moral values must be taught through the schools and other institutions devoted to the pursuit and dissemination of truth rather than the teaching of ideology or custom. A commitment to truth means first that the moral society (like ours) always takes the side of truth, in so far as its leaders can understand what is true. A society or individual dedicated to truth faces reality rather than obscures it. The members of such a society or Satsangh strive to escape from the childish beliefs of young children or the uneducated, beliefs that rely on little more than tradition supported by untested and untestable pseudo facts.

21. Honest people are those who act, speak, and live in terms of the truth as they understand it and diligently try to discover

the truth when they are unsure. Therefore, the scientist, or the non ideological researcher in any field, is the most moral of people. Research and teaching according to the best available knowledge is consequently one of the most moral of professions. It is pertinent to point out that our beloved Master wanted his system to be recognized as a science and desired that our approach should be scientific and encouraged research in the field and never gave any dogma or untested proposition for us to follow.

22. The Ten Commandments given to us by the Master we may see is a good mix of the virtue and social ethics. The moral standards fixed in this Path we can see are not merely aimed at developing character but have a greater purpose in promoting the speed of moving into Trans- personal realms of consciousness through moral courage and

confidence. How the following of the Commandments of the Master is related to our progress in the Path has been discussed in the books “Efficacy and Practice of Raja yoga” and “Imperience Beckons”. Ours is an enlightened ethics (A system of ethics that evaluates actions in terms of their capacity to produce happiness) and does not focus narrowly on character, particularly on character understood as something mental or internal, and separable from its various external manifestations. Our ethics tries to judge the people we are and the lives we lead. It gives us a comprehensive account of the good life we must lead to achieve both character and personal spiritual development. The system of our Master is a comprehensive and holistic approach granting us the moral courage to realise our true nature which is the greatest good that we can do. This ethics it may be understood

encourage us to develop virtues suitable to develop proper dispositions to perform our duty. Swasthi (May it be well with all), the aim of all ethics embraces intellectual, moral and physical excellence, the excellence of human beings and their creations and achievements, and non-human excellence. It requires moral courage to pray for such a goal. In this system that is a practice given to us in the form of 9 P.M. Prayer. We are naturally proud of our Master for enabling us to be bubbling with moral courage to tread this path and may we make our Master proud to see his clan achieve the paradise on earth.

23. Pranam.