

Path of Pain.

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Suffering is the root and results are flowers.

1. One of the meanings of the Sanskrit word 'saha' is "to endure, to go patiently through hardships without rebelling." The process of enlightenment has always been held as an unquestionably painful process. This enlightenment comes only after disillusionment about the permanency of objects and relationships we have some how got involved with. Sahaja therefore would mean that which arises from enduring the suffering process accepting everything as a gift of God. The attitude of taking miseries as blessings for our good is cultivated only through assiduous practice and this obviously is not a gift which many seekers somehow feel they are entitled to. Genuine spiritual life and progress in the same has never been popular, and never will be, because most people are unwilling to open to and accept pain.

2. I find Masters' greatness from a very practical angle is the acknowledgment of pain or suffering or misery in life and sharing his agony and pain. This was the first noble truth of Lord Buddha. This acknowledgment of pain and suffering as true of life is fundamental to the spiritual growth. That these sufferings arise out of desires and wishes is the

knowledge one gains in the process of spiritual development. Master says” There are miseries all around for the embodied one. Even then, we remain so much attached to the body that this thing does not forsake us up to the end, and we even wish to be born again. It matters little that the wish is for being born in a prosperous home or in a royal family, since, as soon as the Name (Individualized Existence) has arisen, my brethren, misery would start, in howsoever subtle mould, it might be cast.”

3. For any sadhaka it is obvious that our pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses or covers as a veil our understanding. It is quite conceivable that not only is pain a necessary aspect of the spiritual process, but that to consciously enter into and experience suffering is the doorway to a more profound understanding of reality, something to even be sought after. This is what Master said: “It is good to be put to worries. The home is the training centre for submission and endurance. To put up patiently with the day-to-day events of life is the highest form of penance and sacrifice. So, instead of anger and resentment, one must cultivate in himself a meek temperament. Meekness refers to that feeling of mind in which, on being rebuked by others, one feels his own self to be at fault, and for which he has to yield to what is meted out to him. For others, aloofness, solitude and dissociation might be the means for cultivating contentment, endurance and freedom from the entanglements of life, whereas for us, to put up

with the taunts and rebukes of the family, friends and society, is the greatest form of penance and sacrifice.”

4. In fact in spirituality we understand through of course a very painful process that the things which we considered as pain and that which we considered as cruel and demonic is infact the very thing that is the very door of liberation. These are the thorns that lead us to the flowers of the garden as Master puts it.

“When we feel ourselves to be doer, difficulty comes in the way. Of course thistles and thorns also bear beautiful flowers, which please the eye and fill the heart with joy. Even so, in case, God is the flower of His own tree, we enjoy God and not the tree to that extent.” There is in reality no other way out. The circumstances that we consider as generating pain in us in fact only generates ‘heat’ and that is felt as pain. It is heat of reality that is not pleasant to the uninitiated in spirituality. Initiation in fact actually involves the process of inviting pain through the most supreme consciousness of humility in accepting the will of Master in every walk of life. As Master put it to me once the process of initiation starts from the aspirant and the process of giving ‘diksha’ by the gurus is a farce and many times a fraud.

5. In fact all mental process that we have in the states of Moodha, Kshipta, Vikshipta, Ekagra Vrtti and Samadhan, there is always a point of heat, and we experience that as pain or restlessness. It may be surprising to some that I have included in the painful

process even the state of Samadhan or settled-ness. In the path to Infinity there arises a condition when we move on even after the state of peace to a state of restlessness in peace. Master puts it as "Many a man must have had a taste of the condition of peace. Let us now taste the former (restlessness) for a spark of which one might be ready to forego a thousand states of peace and calmness. This is in fact the foundation of the entire structure which brings forth rare personalities into the world." My revered father used to say that this is another Dawn. It's the place where reality is coming up above the horizon where it is at dawn, and that very Dawn becomes our point of orientation.

6. The point to understand is that the Master is in fact not asking us to seek suffering, but is saying that we have to look for the heat. This is what was sought to be explained by him in his First Commandment and this of course gets understood only by those who are blessed with the condition of that heat at Dawn- a heat that is not that of the celestial star Sun but that of Reality. That is the heat of activity nearer the Centre or Tam. That state becomes totally unattainable without going through suffering and pain: we learn that Pain is the great teacher or guru who through the lessons of tolerance and fortitude and Gairat teaches us to appreciate and love the heat of Reality. For those who are not advanced but yet get glimpses of the condition obtaining in the Central region it is

common to feel the uncomfortable feeling in the Occipital prominence.

7. In a reasonably successful person there is a huge area of self-satisfaction and so far so good. But then when difficulties and miseries engulf him there develops an area where there is a crack in the door of ego. And it is through that crack alone does the bright light come and it is not all that pleasant in the beginning; it is in fact very irritating. Slowly when the cracks increase and more light starts pouring in through the crevices in the Ego we start learning to look for the same with eagerness and are in fact we wait for such light beams as may drown us. From this state we learn that the light is really inviting us to find our way out and we find the doors of the Ego are now open to go yonder.

8. This is one of the most important lessons in sadhana: to look for the crack in the shell of Ego where there is a bright light coming through. It is too bright and it is irritating and it is painful, but that is the way out. If we do not do this exercise ourselves the masters help us making the cracks bigger and larger through lessons that are equally painful to learn and understand. Many miss the opportunities provided thus because of the thickness and roughness of their shells.

9. Thus the very thing that spiritual aspirants, as well as all other people, should seek but tend to avoid is the exit path of light that is thrown open through the

crevices and cracks in the shell of Ego. Paradoxically this is what every one desperately claims to want to locate. In the practice of PAM the experience of light is not uncommon even for the beginners. This is had by just sitting with an open mind waiting for the Divine light to find its way through the Ego shell. It does come, we know.

10. In the process all the dirt and unwholesome ideas and desires are basically thrown up. Instead of keeping quiet we seem to run in search of our broom to sweep them away. They are inconvenient and unpleasant but they are ours and we should learn to sit quiet in their midst and in fact live through it. This pain in meditation and in real life is something we should stoically endure. When Master said be unmindful of the thoughts that arise during meditation and treat them as uninvited guests he was asking us to develop this attitude of tolerance to our own mistakes and follies which fry up through the crevices in our Ego structure during meditation.

11. When Master said that in the past saints sought for pain as against the present day attitude of shunning it he was emphasizing the fact that this pain is so crucial to one's spiritual understanding that if one is not in touch with it their practice should be to intentionally look for and relate to the pain in any situation. When pain is understood as the means to develop humility which in turn makes us remember the Master so long as the pain persists, it becomes

something that we earnestly seek for. Only then it gets treated as a gift from the Lord. Such an awareness of the pain as a blessing is what the Master was emphasizing in the fifth Commandment.

12. It may be surprising if I were to say that in our tradition, pain is the vanguard of enlightenment. Pain is ego's response to Reality. This should be understood well and the lives of our Masters are a lesson for us to contemplate and understand this basic truth. However if our life is in an environment that is ninety-nine percent happiness and one percent pain we should know that the pain actually represents reality to us and the happiness the illusion in life. The pain is what we need to look for and find.

13. If our meditations are disturbing it is really helping us to search for reality. If however it is always satisfying we should know we are stuck and we should find out how we can become restless. We should understand the content of consciousness during meditations and in other situations and be aware of the whole context and should not try to perpetuate the blissful or peaceful condition. We may have to actually relate to the pain in the bliss. This is the call for the condition of non peace-peace about which Master talks so much. It is our experience that there is no perfect happiness, even in a so-called bliss state and there is always a shadow.

14. I know that every time I have experienced something like bliss, there was at least the fear or

apprehension of losing it somewhere on the periphery of that experience. I have learnt to pay a lot of attention to the shadows in such situations I was in and always yielded to the Master in the most submissive manner. It is not because of any masochistic tendency to torture myself, but because such shadows represents the earth, that's the ground. No one can ever manage his own shadow and there lies the need to surrender. We find that Pain is not only the way out, but the way in and down. That is the reason thinkers like Plato have asked us not to look up the screen to which the light is getting projected where we see our own shadows but to turn back to the Sun from whom the light is emanating. Such a Sun is what we have in our Master and we should turn towards him and not the shadows.

15. Otherwise our spiritual life can easily become imbalanced and fixated at a certain point if the bright aspect of Truth or God is not balanced with its shadow aspect. In the story of Kunti the mother of the Pandavas of Maha Bharat we see her knowing the value of contemplating on her own misery, which brings balance and humility to the exalted states of communion with the Lord and in the end abundance-prosperity that is just and due to her.

16. This is the most important lesson that we gain from imperiencing our meditations: the knowledge of oneself and the cause of our bondages leading to misery. It is then we understand that all the favors

which Master has granted us are invariably enwrapped in the knowledge of the emptiness of our faculties compared with the abundance which our psyche experienced. Thus we recognize our own lowliness and misery, which in the time of our prosperity we were unable to comprehend.

17. When this humility and lowliness of our being is imperienced then the sweetness and pleasures of meditation and prayer are found to give us some degree of strength in our connection with Master. In fact Master then appears to desire to lead us further, wherein we can commune with Him more intimately and abundantly. It is in such poverty of Ego that we commune and when we are thrown into circumstances where there is a play of great pleasures, and we fool ourselves that we are then having the Divine favor shining most brightly upon us, we find that Master has in fact has set us down into darkness and has shut the door to the springs of divine nectar which we were tasting in the company of the Master whenever and as long as we desired.

18. The pain that God gives is His gift, and not His curse, as it is so often felt to be. This clinging to the Master is not an eternal feature of our spiritual life. Once we have learnt the lessons that poverty teaches and humility is firmly established we become capable of managing ourselves. The sadhaka then earns the privilege of being placed down from the safe arms of communion with Master and this is the stage of the

Prapanna Prabhu. The communion is available yet one feels one knows the mind of the Master in such a way he finds it easy to perform without permission.

19. One cannot have a full spiritual life if one has not come to terms with one's pain. Life is painful anyway. Pain can be temporarily evaded or drugged or resisted, but it cannot ultimately be avoided. There is pain in "neurotic suffering," which is the way we ordinarily think of pain, and there is also the pain of suffering for Master, or suffering with humanity. They are very different types of suffering, but both are suffering; and whereas neurotic suffering only perpetuates itself, suffering for Master, or enlightened suffering, serves all of humanity.

20. Many harbor the belief that in order to serve humanity, one must know humanity: in fact one needs to know the Divinity to serve humanity. This is an important aspect of life that tends to be neglected by all. By realizing the potentiality for divinity in every human being we attend to the task of developing the divine resource in humanity. Verily in that lies the solution to the problem of human beings- almost living in continuous warfare, conflict and strife. We need to explore great depths of suffering and the causes thereof so that the problem of life is squarely dealt: this is what Master taught.

21. The Master said "Many of the associates write to me about their troubles and want me to remove them. To them, as also to all others, I would say that the

trouble reminds us of its silent stage. We get comfort in the state of discomfort. We remember it when it's opposite is there. In this way, we develop forbearance and a little bit of peace also." Our sufferings are due to the binds that we have in the various planes of our existence. We have the divine realm of love and that is our plus point. We need to strengthen the same. We also have the human realm which comprises of jealousy, hatred, and host of other negative intentions; we have the realm of the animal, the hungry ghost realm and possibly a hell realm too! The full range of human experience is included in such realms.

22. All civilizations so far have only tried to explore the realms other than the divine all these ages and we are still exploring them. The more we explored into the non divine realms the more we have ourselves got exposed to the dangers of those realms and we have as if put a time bomb on our pockets to annihilate ourselves. The modern day phenomena of human time bombs just to seek satisfaction of hatred and animosity are only a tip of the ice berg. This type of suffering grants no spiritual lessons unless we remember the pledge of our Master that the things will change for the better and he is there to ensure human progress into the divine realms. The limits of human degradation need to be known and felt before a conscious decision is taken to change for the better. And that is a quite a lesson for us to learn!

23. We have to go through all of those experiences in order to be helpful to other people. We need to know the limits of suffering and also the limits of endurance. Then only we can claim a certain amount of eligibility to help others. If we are resistant to suffering what endurance can we teach others? If we were looking for some kind of state of mind, call it a state of bliss only and do not know anything of the suffering during and after meditation we will be least fitted for a serious study of the states in meditation and consequent exercises in 'imperience'. If some one were to ask me "Have you ever been in the state of confusion struggling with lower order mental vrttis?" My answer would be "Of course." If any one further asked me "What did you do then?" my answer would be "Tried to stay there ignoring all other thoughts than the divine light which any way was not there". I understood that attitude is staying with Reality whatever it might be. I have a lesson learnt there that if I can be settled in such a state I can be in any other place and circumstance.

24. To remain fixed on the thought of the divine light when we are bombarded with impulses emanating from the lower animal and ghost realms of consciousness are tough. This suffering is the worst mental plane suffering that we learn to endure with the help of the Pranahuti in our system. But that does not by itself nullify the suffering and in fact we learn to appreciate and evaluate the spectrum of suffering we

have and thereby develop a stoic attitude along with the development of faith in the Master.

25. The lesson that is taught in such a suffering during meditations is to be in the thought of the Master: the only thing that is to be learned. We learn very few things that really matter: we need to learn only to be with our Master, as He wills, not as we will. It is really all the grace of Master, that such experiences are given. That it is felt by us as pain or suffering is our reaction to the heat of such learning. In all this He reveals a part of Himself, and sometimes we are allowed to witness a little bit of it, a peep into it but most of the time nothing that we understand. Mostly it would be too difficult to make sense of such suffering which certain times border on agony and anguish. While reviewing our pettiness in our behavior, thinking and attitudes and treatments to fellow beings and hanging our heads in shame we find still the presence of the Master "There"- where we ourselves loath to live. There is so much love, so much intimacy, and then we wake up after the meditation. That presence of the Master that is imperienced helps us to go to work and attend to whatever we have to do that day.

26. It is often funny that when we get too far in this path and live in a state of constant remembrance where the Master's presence is felt we get a knock at the door and we are given a tax-bill that needs to be cleared immediately. We are also ordinary human

beings who live in this world with all of the limitations of this world. During meditations/imperience we are so free, it is so limitless, and here the concrete world poses problems that are not always easy to tackle. We learn that impatience does not work and stoic attitude alone saves the situation. Problems have a knack of getting solved on their own and few realize this! Or more appropriately it is Time that heals all wounds and solve all problems.

27. If the situation is totally helpless all that we should do is to be helpless. We need to stand 'naked' before Master and he knows what to do. Many sadhakas entertain an idea that with the spiritual life, there will be an increase in the amount of happy experiences and a decrease in the amount of unhappy experiences in life. Most often it is the other way about. In fact there is nothing like happy and unhappy experiences: for a sincere seeker the difference is in the way in which he lives those experiences. In such cases the whole mental sphere is oriented to the Master with no concern for the self and its pains and pleasures. The roots of pain then remind us of the Master as also their result the 'flowers'. The pain then is no torture and the fragrance is no pleasure. In such a state of balance; and only in such a state we can say that the fragrance of the flowers of Chit Lake (Manasarovar) which is turned towards the Divine always, is experienced.