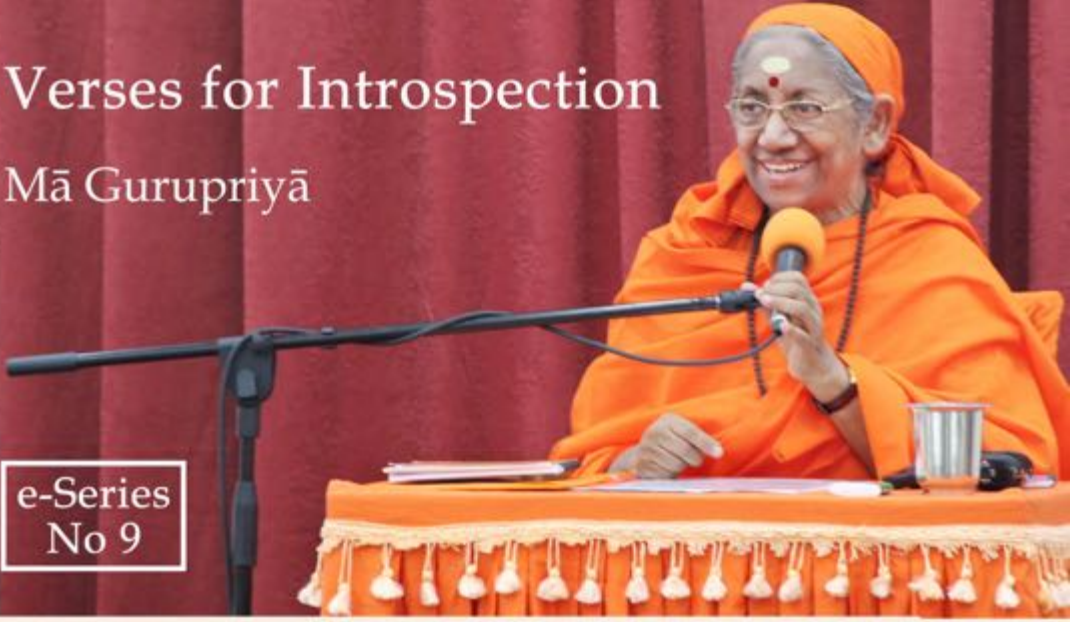


Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

e-Series
No 9



Bathe in the Soul-River

आत्मानदी संयमपुण्यतीर्था
सत्योदका शीलतटा दयोर्मिः ।
तत्राभिषेकं कुरु पाण्डुपुत्र
न वारिणा शुध्यति चान्तरात्मा ॥

ātmā nadī saṁyama-puṇya-tīrthā
satyodakā śīlataṭā dayormi: ।
tatrābhiṣekaṁ kuru pāṇḍuputra
na vāriṇā śudhyati cāntarātmā ॥

Hitopadēśa:

O Pāṇḍuputra (Yudhishtira)! You must bathe in the river called the Soul which is the holy pilgrimage of self-discipline, with truth as its waters, characteral virtues as its banks, and compassion as its waves. The ordinary waters do not purify the Inner Self.



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Points for Introspection

In our day-to-day life, we gather impurity in two ways. One is bodily impurity and the other is impurity of the mind. The body becomes unclean through external dust as well as sweat and other excretions. To remove the dirt from the body and to feel fresh and pure, one takes bath in fresh clean water. Water is indispensable for bodily cleanliness.

But, how does the mind become unclean and impure? The mind loses its purity because of undesirable and selfish thoughts of jealousy, hatred, competition, intolerance, etc. When we indulge in these thoughts, the mind becomes weak, constricted, agitated, and at times sad and despondent. A pure mind is a source of delight whereas an impure mind is a source of affliction.

Generally it is said that when a person bathes in a holy river, all his sins or impurities of the mind get washed off. Does it really happen? After taking bath in a holy river, no doubt one feels peace and divinity; but these feelings are only for a while. All the impure traits of the mind come back in no time. The question is how to remove the impurities of the mind permanently.

This śloka tells us emphatically that the mind does not become purified by external bath, be it in any holy river. For cleansing the mind one must bathe in the inner-river, the Soul-river, which is the supreme

holy pilgrimage of self-discipline. This inner river has truth as its water, characteral virtues as its firm banks, and compassion as its ripples and waves.

What do we mean by taking bath in the Soul-river? Restraining the mind from dwelling on petty matters and the agitating reactions they generate, and constantly living in the awareness of the Truth – the eternal, all-pervading oneness of our Soul. When the mind dwells on the true nature of one's own ever pure Self, all impure thoughts will naturally get dissolved.

This Soul-river is contained firmly by characteral virtues as its banks, which will never allow any harmful inundation. The waves of compassion rising on the water of truth make the river most benevolent. As we dip in the Soul-river, our mind gets soothened by the touch of compassion. We do not get agitated or angry by anybody's behaviour; rather feel compassionate to one and all, experiencing the universal dimension of the Soul.

The brilliance of the Soul is revealed only when the mind is purified. So, one must dive deep into the Soul, and constantly dwell on the universal dimension of the Soul.

As we chant the śloka repeatedly, we understand how, taking a dip in the Soul-river is the true pilgrimage and the true holy-bath.

Word Meaning

आत्मा (ātmā) = Soul; नदी (nadī) = river; संयमपुण्यतीर्था (saṁyama-puṇya-tīrthā) = holy pilgrimage of self-discipline; सत्योदका (satyodakā) = truth as water; शीलतटा (śīlataṭā) = with integrity and poise as the banks; दयोर्मिः (dayormi:) = waves of compassion; तत्र (tatra) = there; अभिषेकं (abhiṣekaṁ) = bath; कुरु (kuru) = do; पाण्डुपुत्र (pāṇḍuputra) = son of Pāṇḍu (Yudhishtira); न (na) = not; वारिणा (vāriṇā) = by the water; शुध्यति (śudhyati) = gets purified; च (ca) = indeed; अन्तरात्मा (antarātmā) = Inner Self;

अन्वयः - (Prose order)

(हे) पाण्डुपुत्र ! आत्मा नदी संयमपुण्यतीर्था सत्योदका शीलतटा दयोर्मिः; तत्र अभिषेकं कुरु । वारिणा च अन्तरात्मा न शुध्यति ।

(he) pāṇḍuputra! ātmā nadī saṁyama-puṇya-tīrthā satyodakā śīlataṭā dayormi:; tatra abhiṣekaṁ kuru. vāriṇā ca antarātmā na śudhyati.