

Let not anxiety and dejection hinder your spiritual path

(- Smt Alamelu Sheshadri (second daughter of Sri T. Krishnamacharya)

Anxiety is the worst mental affliction. Fears and anxieties gnawing at our heart secretly poison our life. Anxiety (*tâpa*) comes from the Sanskrit word *tapa* meaning to burn, to afflict. When a crisis comes penetrates our life, fears and anxiety emerge from our consciousness, because it is the nature of human mind to worry about the future events expecting always the worst. At this state, the feeling of dejection oozes out.

Even the truly great spiritual masters, the devotees of God are not spared from this state since they do undergo these crisis in life. So long as the soul (*jîva*) is in the body, it should get experiences in many fields for its evolution. But each crisis ends in a better understanding of human nature.

Tapa also means austerity. Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gîta (Ch XIV. 16) serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control and the purity of mind is called the penance of the mind. If we follow this discipline, our fears and anxieties will get reduced. It is possible only through one's personal efforts.

Like many, I too underwent all sorts of crisis in my life. I would not exaggerate, if I say my life has been cheated. Yet, I decided to live like a dignified housewife. I endured many insults. I consoled myself thinking of those who suffered more. I learnt to swallow my miseries showing no sign of dejection outside, because I could not get any support from anyone. After all, this is life and one has to bear the burden of life as it comes. My prayer to God is to give me strength to endure this.

I do not know whether I should consider myself lucky, but it did hurt me when I realised that many so called spiritual leaders in India were living exactly the opposite to what they preach. However, I closed my mind's eye to all these telling myself that I should respect the concept of *guru* and not the human being who calls himself a *guru*. Yet how to accept their teachings when they are practically doing the opposite?

From the days of yore there has always been an opposition to spirituality making innocent and naïve people to drown in this opposition. The only remedy is to turn a deaf ear to all

oppositions. Mind is to be controlled to achieve this. To overcome my mental agitations, I read Srîmad Bhagavad Purâna. It did not suit my mind. The result was an increased mental imbalance. I stopped reading the Purâna and reverted to my previous disciplined method of prayer that used to give me strength to bear what comes in my life. Thanks to God's grace, now my mind is gradually recovering from the imbalance.

Unless we keep our mind in peace, we cannot give peace to others. Moreover, when some of our peace is given to others, we have to earn it again to make up for the loss. Just as a bag of money becomes empty, so too our reserve of peace becomes empty after giving to others. Whenever we loose something, we do feel dejected so we might feel dejected because we are losing peace. It is necessary to earn this peace either through pilgrimage, prayers and compassion. Let each dejection be a stepping-stone for transcendence.