

Aspirant's Guide

English version of author's popular Gujarati book 'Sadhak Sathi'



Pujya Shri Atmanandji

The Aspirant's Guide

(English version of Gujarati book 'Sadhak-Sathi')

by

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Dedicated to all the enlightened seekers of
the Ultimate Truth,
which is of the nature of
infinite knowledge and eternal bliss.

- **The Author**

Publisher's Note

'**Aspirant's Guide**' is the English version of the most popular and soul-inspiring Gujarati book '**Sadhak Sathi**' written by Pujya Shri Atmanandji, first published in 1977. The Gujarati version has been so useful to spiritual aspirants that its more than 30,000 copies have been sold so far. Since the second edition of 'Aspirant's Guide' was out of stock, there has been a constant demand from English readers from India and abroad for re-print. As a result, we are glad to bring out this third edition which would go a long way in guiding their life and spiritual journey. The value of this book can be more explicitly understood by going through the 'Introduction' section.

It has been our policy to regularly publish noble and life-elevating literature for the benefit of the society in general and of scholars and spiritual aspirants in particular. Majority of our 40 publications so far have been produced in Gujarati and Hindi, the list of which is printed elsewhere in the book.

In India and abroad, many friends and well-wishers have been instrumental in production of the present work. Shri Pravinbhai K. Shah of North Carolina first proposed the English version in 1987 and extended his goodwill. The first edition of the book came to the readers after several readings by scholars and professors to all of whom we are highly indebted for their affection & interest; but specially to Dr. Paul Marett of Liecester in U.K. who went through the entire script. He made several suggestions which could make the book more easily acceptable to a western reader. The proof-reading of this new edition was in expert hands of Shri Mahendrabhai Khandhar of Los Angeles, USA who meticulously gave fine touches with respect to corrections in spelling, grammar and sentence formation for ease of reading.

We hope that the three glossaries given at the end of the book will make the reading more understandable and useful to the reader. Suggestions regarding the contents and the format will be welcome.

May the Enlightened Souls lead us to the path of eternal bliss.

Dated : 14 February 2017 (Pujya Shri Atmanandji's Self-Realization Day)

Humbly,
Publication Committee, SRASK, Koba

Introduction

The culture and heritage of Indian Sub-continent have incessantly propounded and practiced for spiritual perfection which is known as salvation or moksha. To achieve this aim has been considered the Summum Bonum of human life.

The modern man is often puzzled regarding the true ways and means of achieving this goal of life. Even though the way to spiritual perfection has been well advocated in the preachings of many ancient and modern sages, he is perplexed because of too many ways, too many means and too many beliefs; which often contradict with each other. The availability of the direct guidance of an enlightened spiritual master is very scarce. Under these circumstances, a simple, concise and scientific treatise on the subject is being presented in this small work; especially to suit those devotees and aspirants who would like the guidance in English.

The present work is the first part of the Gujarati version 'Sadhak-Sathi'. As the title of the book suggests, it is meant to be a simple guide for day-to-day practice of developing various sublime virtues in life. When such a development is blended with proper discrimination between the Self and non-Self, spiritual wisdom dawns. With enlightened and enhanced efforts, true devotion, patience, perseverance and regular meditation, one fine day, Self-Realisation is achieved.

The material in each chapter contains the matter in consonance with the title of the chapter. In order to make the reading of the book more interesting, practical and effective, historical incidences from the lives of various great people have been described at the end of each chapter. This will also convince the reader that what has been presented here is not only bookish knowledge, but is such preaching which many of us can put into practice if we make proper efforts in that direction.

Sublime and life elevating teachings of great men, both ancient and modern, have been freely drawn upon, experimented, imbibed and practiced by the author; and the essence has been presented in this work. Hence, this work can be looked upon as a gift handed over to us by all the great spiritual masters - Tirthankers, Rishi-Munis, Great Saints and Devotees. Any flaw that may be found in it, should be attributed as shortcomings of the author himself.

It is hoped that the seekers of the path of truth, irrespective of caste, creed, sect, language, region or religion will get adequate, authentic, useful and historical information as well as distinct inspiration to make their life virtuous and successful.

May the whole mankind be happy, healthy, enlightened and peace-loving.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.

Koba

2nd October 2001

Atmanand

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The path of salvation
is the path of
incessant purification
of the Soul.

– Pujya Shri Atmanandji

1

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the unique part of religious practice. It prevents emergence or rise of anger in one's Self, inspite of the association of external causes that can normally create violent reviling. Forgiveness is a desirable virtue of heroes. Real forgiveness enforces a person to ponder, thus : "Even though I have the capacity to hit and throw back the opposing individual or object, how can I discard this virtue of forgiveness and resort to anger? Anger demolishes the very foundation of forgiveness which is precisely my inborn nature, my true being." Great saints, who uphold forgiveness with such true philosophical thinking are real heroes in this universe.

KSHAMA

The General Nature of Anger

Passion, Anger, and Greed are the three basic vices. They are described in Indian culture as the gateways of hell. An aspirant, therefore, who fears sin, should positively try to overcome these three vices in the right spirit and sense. When a person is overcome with anger, he forgets the difference between the good and the bad and acts blindly without being discreet. The upsurge of anger creates several reactions that develop in the body of the angry person. His heart throbs at a higher rate, his brows furrow, his face becomes flushed and he starts perspiring. The person becomes belligerent, his hands and feet tremble, and this angry person attacks the adversary with blows of his fists or kicks. He starts to hit with anything like a stick, a dagger, a sword or a gun. Anyone who does not want to surrender to such ulterior destructive force (Tandavnrutya) of anger should evaluate it in its very initial stage, and try not to be dominated by it.

The Ways To Conquer Anger

One has to pass through two stages of training to conquer anger:

1. Knowledge of the Subtle Nature of Anger :

The pathway to get rid of anger can not be traced properly until we appropriately know what anger is. Anger is a perverse state of the Soul. There are three causes for the rise of this perversion :

(a) The external object or person which has done some wrong to us, abused us or obstructed us from what we desired to achieve.

(b) Rise of internal illusory Karma. Actually the soul is perfectly pure by nature and it has the valuable characteristic of forgiveness. However, it gets turbid or confused when it is subjected to the rise of Karma resulting in anger. Anger is the reverse of forgiveness.

(c) The main reason for the rise of anger is the forgetfulness of one's own nature, that is, of forgiveness. This means the loss of faith and abandonment of the knowledge that "I am of the nature of forgiveness." The result is an outburst of anger on the part of

the mind. Thus, the lack of clear knowledge about the basic nature of our true Self is the main reason for the rise of anger.

2. Experimenting with Forgiveness in Daily Life :

One who has firmly resolved that the soul is of the nature of forgiveness, has to remain awake and alert when anger seems to overtake him. He should then ponder in his mind this way, “This anger is not found in my original nature; it is the result only of the rise of Karma or action done in the past life. Why should I, then, give a place to this extraneous emotion in my soul ? This anger is unholy. It is an enemy to my nature and it even leads to sorrow in this world.

Moreover, the Karma that will shape itself due to anger will again arise and lead me to sorrow in future. I must, therefore, discard anger that causes loss to me in all respects; and at the same time I must get firmly established in forgiveness, in equanimity of mind, and in the state of the knowledge, because I have the ability to recognize anger before it arises or immediately when it arises.”

A great soul-force is created in one’s Self, by constantly practising in this way the awareness to separate the perversion of anger from one’s true Self. With this soul-force, one gets firmly established in Samadhi, a form of unique forgiveness. Then the person is not tied by the bondage of Karma, but experiences unique and unparalleled peace of mind and heart. Be aware, O Great Souls, that constant and patient experimental training, through a state of awakening of the soul, is precisely the right way to cultivate the virtue of forgiveness and to conquer anger.

Just as a person resolves to abstain from food at the time of a fast, or while taking any other religious vow, similarly, one who wants to root out anger, should take a vow of training everyday, “I shall not subject myself to anger today.” He should also fix a small penance for each lapse so that mistakes committed every day can be counted. If a person trains himself for some time in this way consciously, his nature will change. Such is the great power of this

small vow, and hence, its great utility to the aspirant.

Obstacles To The Sadhana of Forgiveness

It is possible that an aspirant will come across certain obstacles in the present age in which most people are averse to or dislike religion. But the aspirant should know that such insults, obstacles and the like, coming from these people averse to religion, form a good opportunity for him to reduce his earlier Karmas.

From one view-point, it is proper for him to be thankful to these obstacles rather than get angry. When various sorrows of mind and body or insults befall the person, it is proper for him to think thus, "My previous Karmas have come to bear fruit. These men or animals who inflict sorrows upon me are mere instruments. I must, therefore, keep up my forgiveness and must not get angry with anyone."

Also, when somebody accuses a person as being low, ignorant or pretentious, the person does not become that. Generally we become what we think and feel. After knowing this doctrine of truth, it is beneficial to all of us to keep up our nature of forgiveness, even if we have to make great effort to do so.

Conclusions

Enlightened meditation is quickly attained in the path of salvation by resorting to this virtue of forgiveness. Evidently we experience inner bliss. An all-round atmosphere of peace is created because internal mental sorrows as well as external conflicts, quarrels and abuses exist no longer. Thus, with the disappearance of anger and jealousy, atmosphere of friendship and unity is created everywhere in the society. As new bondage of Karma does not arise for the individual aspirant, and as the former Karmas deplete and vanish, the soul becomes increasingly purified and a great state of Sadhana emerges.

May this religion of forgiveness that leads to the bliss of our Self and of others, reign ever victorious in our life.

Greatness And Glory of Forgiveness

1. Forgiveness is the sublime gateway to liberation of the soul.
2. Where there is compassion, there is religion; where there is greed, there is sin; where there is anger, there is death and where there is forgiveness, there is truth.
3. The aspirant should give up anger on realizing that it is unholy, contrary to the real nature of the Soul, and the gateway to sorrow.
4. Uphold forever, in your heart, forgiveness that leads to peace in this life and which is instrumental in bringing the highest and the best state in the life hereafter.
5. Just as a lamp shines itself and shows the path to others by light, similarly saintly souls, in spite of numerous calamities, bring calmness to others.
6. Just as the earth tolerates digging, stomping and striking; just as trees tolerate cutting, similarly only the enlightened souls can tolerate insults and bad words. None others have that capacity.
7. The tree of religion, that grows through right conduct and right knowledge and is tended by Self-study, austerity and faith, will be consumed to ashes by the fire of anger. Let us, therefore, keep anger away at a great distance.
8. Compassion, peace, equanimity, forgiveness, truth, renunciation and non attachment are found in the personality of a person aspiring for liberation. He is ever alert.
9. When causes leading to sorrow arise, the great aspirant again and again resorts to forgiveness, thinking like this, “This is the occasion of a test of my life time Sadhana. Why should I not be on the alert?” or, “Despite being an aspirant for liberation, if I retort by harsh words, like ordinary worldly people, I would be just one of them. What would, then, be the significance of my claim of being the one aspiring for liberation ?”

Pondering again and again in this way, the tenacious aspirants are not shaken and steadfastly maintain forgiveness.

Living Examples of Forgiveness

(1) Shivaji was a great Hindu king of the state of Maharashtra, India, during the 17th century. He fought fiercely the last Mogul Emperor, Aurangzeb, for the freedom of India. He was considered a great warrior, patriot, and administrator in western India.

Swami Ramdas was the guide and preceptor of the king Shivaji. It was with the training and inspiration of Swami Ramdas that Shivaji attained great success in his life. Swami Ramdas has been a famous saint in the history of India.

Once, during the summer, Swamiji was on his way to meet Shivaji with his pupils. Some of his pupils entered a farm, broke off a few stalks of sugarcane and began squeezing them. However, when the watchman of the farm arrived, they quickly ran away. At that time, Swami Ramdas was sitting nearby meditating upon God. On seeing him, the watchman thought, "It seems that this monk is behind it." Under this mistaken belief, the watchman beat him severely and threw him out. Swami Ramdas, with his spirit of equanimity, did not utter a single word.

Now, when Shivaji met Swami Ramdas, he saw many scars on his body. Shivaji gathered the facts from the pupils. The watchman was immediately arrested and brought in front of the king Shivaji.

Shivaji said, "Well Guruji, what punishment shall I give to this man?"

Ramdas replied, "I myself shall punish him."

He announced his judgment in the following words, "From today, the farm shall be awarded to this watchman. He shall be exempted from all taxes during his life-time."

Shivaji, his courtiers and the pupils of Ramdas, were all stunned on hearing this judgment. They began to ponder. Look, how liberal are the hearts of great men! Swamiji forgave fully this man's ill-deeds and also did a good turn to him.

(2) King Ranjit Singh (1780 - 1839), better known as the Lion of the state of Punjab, India, was well known for his kingship, benevolence and military leadership.

Once, while he was walking on the outskirts of the city, a stone hit him. The king was injured and his body-guards came running to help him and looked for the person who had thrown the stone. After a short while, the body-guards presented an old woman before the king.

She submitted, "O King ! My grandson was without food for the last three days. As he had no food, I threw a stone at this mango tree, so as to get a ripe fruit to satisfy my grandson's hunger. However, due to my misfortune, the stone missed its target and hit your honor! It was not at all my intention to hurt you."

King Ranjit Singh heard the old woman and said to his followers, "Give a thousand rupees and food to this woman and arrange to send her home in all honor!"

The soldiers and others were stunned and said, "O King, this woman had the audacity to hit you with a stone. She should therefore be severely punished."

The king said, "Well, brethren ! If a tree which has no brain, yields a fine fruit when hit with a stone, how can we, as intelligent persons, punish this woman ?"

This is the reason why this great, benevolent and forgiving King attained a place among the noble Kings of India.

2

Charity

In the normal course, charity lies in giving away one's wealth and possessions, with the idea of cooperating and encouraging any noble activity. When the giving up of one's ownership is accompanied by the absence of desire of reward for charity, the height of charity is reached. The liberal donor then really attains the status of a supreme donor.

There are several types of charity, but here we will consider just four types, which are useful in spiritual progress. They are :

1. Charity accompanied by utter devotion and humility. (सुपात्रदान)

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2. Compassionate charity. (अनुकंपादान)
3. Charity of gentleness. (अभयदान)
4. Charity of knowledge. (ज्ञानदान)

1. Charity Accompanied by Utter Devotion and Humility:

In this charity, the recipient is a far more virtuous person than the donor. Only persons endowed with understanding and discrimination can possibly undertake this.

The donor¹ who resorts to this kind of charity intends to reduce greed in his life, and thereby becomes better suited as an aspirant; so that slowly and steadily the unique virtues present in the recipient, dawn in his own life. Again, it may be that, the person who accepts charity is a person endowed with self-knowledge or is a high-level aspirant and the donation is so auspicious that it will nourish for long period the sublime traditions of right-knowledge and right self-control. When this happens, naturally the traits of purity are nurtured at the individual level and higher cultural values get disseminated in the community.

Receivers of such charity are selfless and benevolent individuals. It is logical, therefore, that donations to such virtuous individuals be accompanied by proper respect and due honor. It is understandable, that no matter what the form of this charity may be - whether giving of food, clothes, medicines, scriptures or a place to stay - it should always be carefully thought out, and associated with due respect.

This type of donation is predominant in the life of a discriminating aspirant, because, on such occasions, he is lucky to come in contact with virtuous, ascetic, learned and saintly personalities. In such a case, if the aspirant is alert and awake, he will begin to follow the discriminating and scientific process of enjoying the virtues and the resultant process of bringing virtues into his own life.

This delight in virtue will inspire him to serve saintly persons or monks and nuns in so many different ways, e.g. rising on seeing

1. Characteristics of the donor : Trust, content, worship, knowledge, detachment, forgiveness and strength are the 7 virtues of a donor.

them, salutation to them with folded hands, going forward to receive them, walking behind them in all humility, offering higher seats to them, behaving in a manner befitting them, going to the door or the outskirts of the village to bid good-bye to them, obeying their directives and so on. His devotion towards the saints will take many such forms.

When this is followed honestly and sincerely, the aspirant will himself attain sainthood.

This is because “There is a lot of difference between a Paras gem (touchstone) and a Saint. The former transforms iron into gold, while the latter makes a man into a Saint”.

Surely we all approve of making men into saints. Without approval and conviction of this, our spiritual aspiration is not fully justified. Let us ponder over this thoughtfully.

2. Compassionate Charity :

In this type of charity, the main purpose is to remove the sufferings of the afflicted people. In this case, the recipient benefiting from the charitable act is not more virtuous than the liberal donor. The feeling of compassion in the heart of the donor is therefore dominant in this case. The donor, who is inspired by this feeling, helps afflicted people with sympathy and serves them by body, mind or wealth.

Compassionate charity consists of liberal donation by a person who is moved by the pangs of the tormented human being or animal to get rid of sufferings as soon as possible. The donor tries his best to remove their suffering in a variety of ways.

The charity may consist of help and donation to the poor and beggars, those who have suffered by famine, floods, hunger etc. It may be by liberal donations to the orphans, the widows, needy students, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the mad, the mentally unbalanced, and so on. No distinction whatsoever is made in this charity.

Compassionate charity is bestowed on the poor and the miserable,

irrespective of caste, color, creed, origin, the virtuous or those bereft of virtue, follower of the same religion or of a different one. The sole purpose here is the removal of the afflictions - whether man, animal, insect or any living being. The feeling of respect or honor or of reverence towards the recipient is secondary here. What is predominant is sympathy and compassion through love and friendship.

Generally, social charity is included in this type. Social charity starts with family charity in which brothers, sisters, cousins and others are beneficiaries. But the charity of the real righteous man does not stop here; it constantly expands far and wide.

Donations, such as for the construction and the running of a hospital, the construction and maintenance of a place of rest for travellers, for digging wells, tanks or gardens, for community halls and town halls, or for schools, colleges, dormitories are donations for social welfare. They are, therefore, included under the heading of Compassionate charity. Here, in these donations, the dominant feeling is for social uplift, community welfare and for the progress of social and institutional activities.

3. Charity of Gentleness :

This is the best and most important of all charities. Charity of gentleness means shaping one's routine of life in such a manner that all living beings feel safe and secure with you. No external resource is necessary in this charity. All human beings can, therefore, resort to it.

But one important trait of this charity is the need of constant awakening of the soul. The aspirant who takes recourse to this charity will not cause damage of any kind to any one by his actions. He will not use speech afflicting others and not even think ill of others.

Only if there is a constant awakening of soul, can one succeed in not causing ill to anybody mentally, physically or by speech. Thinking deeply, we will realize that only great people who have renounced all attachment to worldly life, have the full capacity to

practice this kind of charity. But it is proper that we ordinary people also practice it as far as possible to attain the good of our own souls.

4. Charity of Knowledge :

Charity of knowledge helps worldly souls to permanently release themselves from the cycle of birth and death and thus paves the way to eternal bliss. Even though this type of charity is possible to some extent by learned and knowledgeable people, the main donors of this type are the great Acharyas and Monks who are the very embodiment of divine knowledge with super-intellect and great scriptural knowledge.

In this type of charity, the donors impart knowledge of truth and philosophy which helps the noble ones in their ultimate well-being. This kind of charity is dispensed through the media of lectures and preaching religious discourses.

In this, both the donor and beneficiary thereof, reap the highest gain for their spiritual progress. Finally, it leads both to the highest benefit and the supreme state of liberation.

Glory of Charity

- a. Persons of three categories stand highest in Indian society. They are the devotee, the donor and the hero. In Gujarati there is a very famous saying that pays tribute to the mothers of these three types of human beings :

“O Mother, if at all you give birth to a child, let it be a devotee, a donor or a hero. Otherwise, may you prefer to remain barren. Do not lose your vitality in giving birth to others.”

In India emperors like Shreyans and Karna; kings like Shibi, Harshavardhan and Bhoj; and great men like Bhamasha, Jagdusha have resorted to various activities of righteous charity and inspired us to follow their footsteps.

- b. Wealth has three destinations : (i) utilizing for just causes, (ii) utilizing for liberal donations, and (iii) loss due to exhaustion

of good deeds (punya). Discriminating persons know this quite well and resort to charity.

- c. Charity is the very basis of the duties of householders. A householder's life bereft of charity is not the right type of life.
- d. Righteous charity enhances peace and contentment in life. It conduces the spread of fame in the world. It yields happiness and ease to other living beings, and leads one to the highest state in the life hereafter. Charity finally yields the eternal state of liberation. Discriminating persons, therefore, accept it as a normal course in all sincerity.
- e. This is how the householders are expected to use their wealth in charity - the noblest ones 25 percent, the middle ones 10 percent, and the average ones 6 percent of their income. Ancient Acharyas have accepted such high standards of charity.
- f. We should understand that the success of a healthy body and mind lies in austerity and devotion; that of wealth in charity, and that of power and intellect in helping others.
- g. The supreme donor resorts to charity of his own free will without being asked.
- h. Charity is the greatest gesture, no enemy equals greed, no ornament equals character and no wealth equals contentment.
- i. The main purpose of the wealth of the noblest men is to bring an end to the misfortunes of all living beings. Such wealth is known as "Lakshmi" (The Goddess of Wealth).

Living Examples of Charity

- (1) Ganeshprasad Varniji was a Jain scholar and a saint of the 20th century.

He distinctly contributed towards educational and moral welfare of the society in Bundelkhand, part of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states in India.

During the course of his pilgrimage on foot, he came to a holy

place known as Gaj Pantha, near the city of Nasik, in the state of Maharashtra.

He met a rich person during his stay at the holy place. The rich man was pious and compassionate. He told Varniji, "Noble Sir ! We will go up the hill and dine together." Though tired due to three months of continuous pilgrimage on foot, Varniji gave his consent to this pious person. They climbed the hill, worshiped Gods, dined, and came down for prayer in a temple.

The rich man donated a large sum. Varniji had only an amount sufficient for buying food for the next day. Varniji was puzzled and perplexed. "What should be done now ?" He thought, "I must donate, and for most of the day, I shall have to take my chance or go hungry." With this thought, Varniji donated his total amount.

The temple attendant hesitated to take such a small offering. The rich man smirked. Varniji pondered over the matter and said to himself, "My inner spirit is firm. My soul is happy as I make the donation of this trivial sum. I still remember my firm conviction in the spirit of righteousness that I then experienced."

Which donation is superior ? A large sum or a measly amount ? Well, let the reader consider this and evaluate justly his own spirit of charity.

(2) Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was a great educator, philanthropist, and socio-religious leader in the state of Bengal, India, who lived in the 19th century.

Once as he was passing by a road in Kolkata (Calcutta), he came across a sad man. "Why are you so sad, friend ?" asked Ishwarchandra. Looking at him, the man said, "Well brother ! Don't bother about it, you cannot possibly help me in my pitiful plight. It is a long story."

Ishwarchandra insisted him to tell the story of misery and sadness. At last the man said, "I incurred a big debt in order to get my daughter married. A law suit has been filed against me, as I have

failed to repay the debt.” Vidyasagar took the details of the legal brief and address of the court from him.

Then, on the day of the hearing of the case in the court, when that debtor went to the court he was told that somebody had come to the court a few days before and paid off his debt. The lawsuit was, therefore, settled.

The man did not know that it was Vidyasagar who had paid off his debt. A secret donation it was ! The beneficiary never knew the donor or the reason for his charity. When there is no desire for any reward and a spirit of selflessness, this is the best of donations.

(3) It was year 1656. Shivaji had come from Raigadh and he had stationed himself at the Satara Fort. Shivaji heard the Mantra, “Jai Jai Raghuvir Samarth !” On inquiry, he learnt that Swami Ramdas had come himself to request donations at his door ! What should he give ? Diamonds and Sapphires ? Gold and Silver ? Food and Clothing ? Shivaji could not make up his mind. He wrote a small note and placed it in the satchel of Swami Ramdas.

The Swami said, “Well Shivaji, what is in the note ? If you had given provisions, we could have prepared food.” Shivaji replied, “Gurudev ! I have given just and proper donation.” Swamiji asked his pupil Uddhav to read the note. It read “I submit, at the lotus feet of my Guru, everything that I have acquired till today including myself and my kingdom.” Ramdas said “Shivaji ! What will you do now ?” Shivaji replied, “Service to your holiness.”

“Then take up the satchel and accompany me for more pledges. Shivaji became a beggar, begged food, cooked on the river bank, and they had their meal. Ramdas said, “Shivaji ! I am a hermit; what am I to do with this kingdom ? Take it back”. Shivaji was not willing. But Ramdas was the preceptor, gave him his blessings, his Paduka and a saffron colored cloth and issued orders to Shivaji to accept his Kingdom and no option was left. Shivaji served his people for his whole life, following the orders of his preceptor (Guru).

The pupil donated everything and the teacher was all detachment.
What a unique rewarding combination !!!

True Mercy

The General Nature of Mercy

Mercy generally means not to inflict pain on any living creature. Observers of supreme and perfect mercy are those noble people who have given up all the worldly activities and have adopted full time spiritual life (Sadhana). However, the ordinary people can also resort to mercy to the best of their ability.

The General Order of Observance of Mercy

If we are vigilant in daily life, whether in social, domestic, or business affairs, we can certainly save many innocent lives from destruction. We can prevent violence on the lives of ants, flies, bugs,

cockroaches and such other small insects, if we are alert while we eat, drink, bathe, cook, arrange our books and other things. If we become merciful towards these small insects, how can we possibly become cruel towards big animals like cows, buffaloes, dogs, sheep, goats, donkeys, horses and even human beings ? Human being is considered superior to all other forms of life.

The behavior described below is not only proper but essential to become merciful towards animals and human beings :

- * If we have domesticated animals or have kept them for certain purposes, we should provide them with food and drink in time and due shelter from weather conditions like rain, heat and cold.
- * We should not demand excessive work from the above mentioned animals, or servants, or exploit them in any other way.
- * A businessman should not indulge in shady deals to secure unreasonable excessive profits derived by unjustly depriving others of their wealth and hurting them.
- * If a poor customer comes for the purchase of basic needs, such as food or clothes, and if he is a little short of money, let us not humiliate him but find a mutually beneficial solution and fulfill his needs.

Let us become gentle and sweet in our behavior towards children and elders of the family, servants and subordinates, neighbors, people of our residential areas including the members of our society. This will prevent conflicts, quarrels, and offending words; consequently no occasion will arise to inflict pain through insulting language.

An aspirant should always be aware that he does not intend to consciously inflict any injury to others. Thus, not only does he refrain from abusing others, but eventually from even wishing ill of others, as far as possible.

The Higher Order of Observance of Mercy

After taking note of this general order of observance of mercy, let us now proceed to understand its special significance. The great saints have, by their unique knowledge of life, preached us the mercy that is subtle, scientific, and effective. The result is that their religion (Dharma) is the supreme 'Ahinsa-Dharma' or complete abstinence from harming any living beings.

Consumption of any non-vegetarian food, whether eggs, meat or fish, is indicative of intentional violence, reflecting extreme cruelty, since such meal cannot be prepared without depriving some living creature of life or potential life. When we use onion, garlic, potatoes and root vegetables as food, many ultra microscopic lives are destroyed. Again, there is no vital loss of health if we abstain from consuming these root-vegetables. It is wise therefore, that discriminating and pious people do not indulge in such foods.

Taking food after sunset makes it difficult to avoid injury to tiny insects. Therefore, if we could avoid taking food during night time as far as possible, it will also contribute towards the observance of mercy, compassion and non-violence.

We should know the source of birth of living beings, if we desire to cultivate the ability to observe such subtle mercy. This observance of subtle mercy is not possible if we walk on green grass, spill water without any purpose, needlessly pluck flowers while walking, dig earth purposelessly or consume ice, moldy flour, or stale fruits. Discriminating persons should, therefore, be careful and cautious in these matters. The topic is expanded further in the chapter-17 on Awareness of Soul.

Observance of mercy described here is generally meant for the enlightened householder. Deeper and more subtle observance is necessary in the duties of ascetics. However, we shall not go into the extensive details of the topic here because it does not directly concern an average aspirant.

Mercy For Self

So far, we have discussed the nature of conventional mercy. From the very beginning of time, the Soul, not knowing its real nature, subjects itself to feelings such as passion, jealousy and ignorance, subsequently destroying its virtues such as knowledge, vision, character, and divine bliss.

In order to prevent such harmful effects on our Soul, we have to take steps to avoid the perverted states of ignorance, passion, jealousy etc. This is the best way to exercise the concept of true mercy towards Self or others. An aspirant, therefore, should try his level best to observe absolute mercy. Let us salute those masters of supreme meditation, and such other great saints, who having stemmed the tide of passion, jealousy and the like have firmly established themselves in the practice of absolute mercy or compassion.

The Glory of The Creed of True Mercy (Daya-Dharma)

1. You stated in your sermon, O Master ! That no religion (Dharma) equals mercy. Without fear, let living beings tackle their faults. Truthfulness, character and charity are purposeful only when coupled with true mercy, just the way the rays cannot shine without the sun, true religion cannot exist without true mercy.
2. True mercy is the mother of the world. It is a child of truth and divine bliss. Mercy is the upward mobility. It is the only real wealth. Actually it is the virtue of virtues. Happiness of heaven and divine bliss is possible only through true mercy. Only true mercy does good to all living beings and puts an end to all pains and calamities.
3. If we, in our worldly life, look after the growth and welfare of our children with tender care, by what logic can we annihilate the offsprings of other beings ?
4. Austerity, knowledge of scriptures, observance of vows, meditation, charity, and sound character can all result from

true mercy. The religion of true mercy should, therefore be observed with maximum effort, so that all other religious activities become fruitful.

5. The best means to attain religion, is to be compassionate, humble and lofty in character.
6. Violence in any form is an animal instinct, not a human instinct. We should not resort to violence if we presume that human being always aims at the uplift of his soul.
7. One who is the seed of the wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpavruksha) of Dharma, who endows all the beings of the universe with every happiness as well as destroys all sources of sorrows, may this Goddess of true mercy be ever victorious.
- 8- He alone can be considered a real gentleman who is merciful, compassionate, speaks softly, and conveys humbleness through his eyes.
9. All our sinful actions are destroyed by the Darshan of the great noble persons who do not torment any being by body, mind or speech.
10. All faiths and all scriptures accept the doctrine that true mercy is the very basis of true religion. When observance of true mercy is not the aim exclusively, sins exist. The aspirants should not, therefore, under any circumstances or under any pretext, give up this virtue of true mercy or compassion and hurt living beings.

Living Examples of True Mercy

- (1) Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was a great scholar and philanthropist of Bengal in India. Once he was on his way to the village Kalna with his friend, Girishchandra Vidyasagar. He saw a poor laborer lying on the ground. He was suffering from diarrhea and was constantly vomiting. His clothes were smelling bad. Many persons placed their handkerchiefs over their noses and passed by with their faces turned. The laborer's satchel containing all

his possessions was lying next to him.

When Ishwarchandra saw the suffering man he understood the situation. He lifted up the sick man on his shoulders and instructed his friend Girishchandra to follow with the man's possessions. They walked to the Kalna village. Arrangements were made at a rest house and a doctor was called for the poor sick laborer.

The sick man became normal within two days with the help of proper treatment. Then Ishwarchandra said, "Well friend, my mission is over. I shall go now." He gave money to the laborer and left with his friend Girishchandra. The laborer was simply stunned by the true mercy of this godly person.

Such was Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, the very embodiment of compassion. His selfless service and his divine spirit of true mercy deserves our praise.

(2) Madanmohan Malaviya is known as the upholder of the Aryan civilization. He was the founder of the famous Banaras Hindu University. He was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi. He was a great scholar and educationalist who associated himself with the freedom struggle of India.

Once as a student, while walking on the road, he saw a restless dog. It was running back and forth because of a wound in its ear. Malaviyaji approached the dog with food and took the dog to a veterinary hospital where the attending doctor gave him medicine for it and warned him, "Well Madanmohan, always be careful because sometimes such dogs are rabid and bite people." However Malaviyaji had no fear. He applied proper medicine on the wound of the dog and sat there till the dog slept soundly. What is our usual reaction when we see sick and dirty dogs ? Let us think of this and grasp the greatness of the virtue of true mercy in such legendary people and learn from them the inherent equality of all living beings.

4

Celibacy

The word “Brahmacharya” consists of two words: a. Brahma means Soul and

b. Charya means Conduct.

The code of conduct that leads to realization of the Soul would, therefore, be the general meaning of Brahmacharya or celibacy.

It should, however, be understood that the concept of celibacy is very wide, subtle and complicated. Only a highly enlightened soul, well-established in celibacy is really competent to give an all-embracing conceptual analysis of celibacy. We are, however, giving a belief description and

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analysis of the subject of celibacy as it applies in our present-day-life.

This presentation is based on authentic saints and our own limited experience. May this delight those who aim at the attainment of the sublime and supersensuous bliss and may it percolate in the depth of their souls, and lead them to exert themselves in all ways, in the practice of this pure, pious and supreme vow (Uttam Vrat) of Brahmacharya.

Background

The proponents of Aryan culture have broadly classified the life - activities of human being into four categories - Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha :

- (1) Dharma : Practice of religion
- (2) Artha : Activity for earning livelihood
- (3) Kama : Activity for fame, family etc.
- (4) Moksha : Activity for the attainment of salvation.

It is recommended that an average person should go through the four stages (Ashrams) of life known as Brahmacharya, Gruhastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyastha Ashrams. They are prescribed as follows :

1. Brahmacharya-ashram : Student Life
2. Gruhastha-ashram : Family Life
3. Vanaprastha-ashram : Service-oriented family and social Life
4. Sanyastha-ashram : Monkhood Life
(Renunciation)

Looking from the viewpoint of an average person, this kind of arrangement has been found fairly practical and quite useful to the society. However, there is one small group of exceptional personalities which adopts life-long celibacy right from childhood, gradually developing as a full-time aspirant. This may be due to the psychic effects (Sanskar) of previous lives, influence of the preceptor (Guru), good company, and a firm desire for liberation of the soul

from the bondage of the body (Moksha).

Once the right conviction becomes well established, life-long celibacy can lead a person more easily to the attainment of various extraordinary capacities which are ultimately conducive to self-realization & salvation. This has been exemplified by the lives of so many saints, great souls and Acharyas.

Sadhana of Celibacy

1. As expected of ordinary householders.
2. As expected of seekers of true knowledge and persons desiring liberation.
3. Complete celibacy.

1. As Expected of Ordinary Householders

The aspirants of celibacy in this first stage have to resort to Sadhana while keeping their business, occupation, family structure, and social relations. They try to practice celibacy by way of good manners or as advised by a religious preacher. They have relationship with their own spouses only and none with others. At this stage, socio-cultural considerations dominate and the spiritual vision is subordinate because they are not acquainted thoroughly with the original and vital form of celibacy.

Since, lofty morality is expected of people of high status in society, and taking into consideration the physical and social disadvantages of immoral behavior, these aspirants normally remain monogamous and are therefore faithful to their spouses and avoid extra-marital relationships.

2. As Expected of Seekers of True Knowledge and Persons Desiring Liberation :

Here, celibacy starts with right and firm conviction born out of real discrimination. In persons of this cadre, real love for the vow of celibacy dawns because they have a clear idea regarding its moral, physical, mental, social and spiritual benefits.

They have found from their experience that it is particularly helpful in self-study, devotion, postural-mastery and concentration of mind. Real sadhana of celibacy starts at this stage, because it has been born from a critical, just and scientific process of discrimination of the Self and the non-Self based on an all-round study and experience.

Scriptural and experiential studies have fully established that mind remains restless and agitated unless a person is fully satisfied with his own spouse. Such restless person cannot concentrate in Self-study and allied Sadhana. The following methods which are helpful in the observance of celibacy are therefore accepted by the persons in this category :

- a. Repeated acquaintances with Mahatmas, saints and monks.
- b. Following the guidelines of a noble routine of life. This means not letting the mind idle even for a moment and being constantly associated with one or the other type of good activity.
- c. Methodical and regular study of good scriptures,
- d. Development of the virtue of humility by devotion, worship and praise of the virtuous ones and full consciousness regarding one's own faults, with sincere efforts to discard them.
- e. Forming good habits and observing useful rules whereby one achieves freedom from addictions. This means a habit of leading a regular life so that it becomes easy to master the five senses and the mind. The mind becomes easily stable in Sadhana by the above practices.
- f. Discarding all harmful external influences that intoxicate the mind. It means diminution/dissociation of watching movies, going to parties, club visits, sensual entertainment, and so on.
- g. Not reading cheap and inferior literature like passion generating stories, songs, dramas etc., or even keeping such books in one's possession.
- h. In the area of discipline regarding food : (i) discarding spicy foods as well as onions and garlic, (ii) total banishment of

meat, alcohol and addicting drugs, (iii) rich foods like Ghee, milk and cream should also be taken within limits so that general health is maintained, and yet the senses do not become impudent, (iv) Chapatis, pulses, rice, vegetables, fruits and curds, as also water and liquids should be taken in plenty so that vitality and health are maintained. Body and mind will then retain their composure and the person will be able to engage himself in Self-study, acquaintance with the noble people, and meditation in all its intensity, (v) The aspirant should also cultivate the habit of eating plain food and occasionally less food. With this, the Sadhana will gain good momentum, the body will be healthy, idleness will end, steadiness and mastery over posture will develop.

The study of religious scriptures is simultaneously necessary in the Sadhana of this stage. Thus, observance of celibacy is not just physical Sadhana but it is one of constant awakening of the soul. The aspirant comes to this realization through learning.

With this spiritual discipline, contentment grows to a great extent so that even a brief contact with his own wife is repented. He confirms his respect for complete celibacy again and again through listening to religious discourses, acquaintance with noble people, pilgrimage to holy places (Tirtha Yatra) and study of philosophy.

The aspirant also imbibes inspiration by reading the life and work of great celebrate souls like Hanuman, Bhishma, Lord Neminath (Arish tanemi), Lord Parshwanath, Sudarshan Sheth et al. In recent times, Mahatma Gandhi and Ramkrishna Paramhans retained married status and still practiced celibacy to a great extent, thus presenting before us inspiring examples of the Sadhana of celibacy. In this stage, observance of celibacy for 12 to 28 days per month or even more is achieved. This leads to great success in steadiness of Sadhana.

3. Complete Celibacy

From the viewpoint of Ultimate Reality, this is the highest stage of the supreme Sadhana. Its attainment is possible only to genuinely

detached persons endowed with Self-realization. The vow of celibacy here, means a complete observance of this great vow by body, speech and mind. The persons who have reached the highest stage, are genuinely immersed in Soul (own Soul) as a reward of their supreme Sadhana of knowledge and self-control (Gnan and Samyam).

Mostly, such persons prefer to live in a monastery at the feet of a preceptor or in an Ashram or a service organization for the safe and pure observance and maintenance of their vow. This is because, here they have the benefit of constant acquaintance with noble sages and religious discourses delivered by them. Mostly, they are full-time aspirants.

In the case of some persons who may have a small responsibility as householder, they might pay a casual visit to their houses, but once that worldly responsibility is fulfilled, they get fully engrossed in the constant pursuit of purity. It is then that their complete celibacy shines out in its true color and brightness.

It need hardly be stressed that when such an aspirant has to go home, he stays in a separate room, observes his daily routine and takes no interest in worldly problems except where and when he must. He returns to his abode (Ashram etc.) as soon as his work is over.

Glory of Celibacy

1. a. The celibate, who on viewing a young beauty in full bloom, does not get excited in the slightest degree and considers her to be no more than a wooden doll, is like God.
- b. If a person controls his passion, he can conquer the whole world. This is like vanquishing the king during a war, as a result of which the whole kingdom along with the army and its power is conquered too.
- c. Strength is always required to accomplish any task. The same is also true for Self-knowledge. Let the wise therefore, take on the strength of celibacy to accomplish Self-Realization.
2. One who desires to attain the Supreme Reality, observes celibacy.

3. The practice of celibacy is indeed a major and unmatched contributory factor in :
 - a. Controlling the five senses and the mind.
 - b. Avoidance of lethargy.
 - c. Attainment of the highest degree of Self-contemplation.
 - d. Sadhana of all types conducive to the liberation (Moksha) of the Soul.
4. Celibacy is said to be the most difficult of all vows and therefore it is considered as the principal vow (Vrat). No repentance is sufficient for a monk (Muni) who violates this fundamental vow in the smallest degree. Breach of this vow is the downfall of an aspirant. Therefore aspirants have to nourish this vow of celibacy with maximum possible care and alertness.
5. Celibacy is said to be the supreme austerity (Tap).
6. The man who observes faultless, true and complete celibacy deserves all praise and veneration, not only from common people of the world, but also from all great souls of the universe.
7. Observance of celibacy even in a dream is not possible for persons with limited capacity and loose character, who are timid, helpless, and slaves to their senses. Only persons of great spirit are able to observe this vow in its true sense.
8. Even highly enlightened souls have therefore envisaged no expiation for breach of celibacy. Those who really observe this great vow deserve the highest respect.
9. Strength and health are the benefits of celibacy. Further, it confers long life and brightness of mind. The body is energized, the intellect and memory get sharpened and speech becomes lucid, melodious and effective. By observance of celibacy, steadiness in concentration is achieved, the state of noble thinking gets extended, fatigue is no longer experienced in

meditation and the aspirant can become a master of Samadhi that yields supreme bliss through the attainment of multifaceted self-control. We thus realize that celibacy is really the best companion of an aspirant.

Living Examples of Celibacy

(1) One of the main disciples of Swami Vivekanand was Swami Vibhutanand. The pupil was as capable as the master.

Once, a young woman entered his apartment with lustful intention, but when she saw the very gentle figure and divine aura of the Swami, she was stunned. Seeing her stunned, the Swami said, "Well mother, you will not go without something !" He offered Prasad (food) to her and she had no option but to accept it. The instinct of lust in the woman was dissipated on hearing the word "Mother".

She accepted the Prasad of God, bowed before the Swami with tears rolling down her eyes, begged forgiveness and left.

Such is the impressive grandeur of observance of life-long celibacy.

(2) The king Chhatrasal was a great warrior of the 17th century, well known for his nobility and philanthropic works. He ruled part of northern India and gave a bitter fight to Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb.

He was the ruler of the kingdom of Panna around the year 1670 A.D. Not only he was heroic like a lion but far brighter was his aura of celibacy. Besides being a man of royal blood, he was in the full bloom of youth. On seeing his grand personality, one daughter of a feudatory lord became enamored of him. She was overcome by love for him. Lust is blind and when one is overcome by it, one loses all sense of understanding and reason. She approached the king and, with folded hands, she said, "Well, your honor ! I am very much afflicted!"

"Noble lady ! What is the cause of your affliction ?" inquired the king carefully and cautiously. "I can reveal that only if you promise to remedy it," replied the lady slyly. The king, with his simple heart, replied : "I shall certainly help you, if possible." The young woman, with uncontrolled expression and gestures said, "Sir,

I am childless. I desire a son like you”.

For a moment, the king was stunned, but he immediately controlled himself, “Oh, you only desire a son like me. Well mother! Chhatrasal is your son.”

The king touched her feet and accepted her as queen-mother. Such was his youthful righteousness, patience and self-control.

In the history of Bundelkhand, the time of this king’s rule is considered to be a golden period. Under him his subjects had full security and prosperity.

(3) Pandit Shri Sumeruchandra Diwakar is a great scholar of modern Jain Society. He is over 90 years old and lives in Shivni, in Madhya Pradesh, near Nagpur.

Once during the Paryushan festival, he was lecturing to a group of youths. He preached Dharma and then added, “Friends, do exercise and cultivate self-control. This will lead to perfect health and you will never require the vitamin tablets from doctors.”

The young men started asking among themselves. “We should like to know how far Panditji exercises self-control himself”.

On hearing this Pandit Indralal Shastri said, “Friends, Panditji is a devout celibate from childhood.” The youths were stunned.

(4) Dayanand Saraswati was a great religious leader and authority on the Vedas of Hindu religion. He founded “Arya-Samaj”, a socio-religions institute in the last century in Punjab.

Dayanand Saraswati was visiting Ashwinikumar Dutt in Calcutta.

Ashwinikumar asked him, “Sir ! Does Kama (lust) ever bother you?” Dayanand Saraswati replied, “Kama! I always engage myself in Kama (work). Therefore Kama (lust) never crosses my mind.” Ashwinikumar then asked, “Isn’t your body like other humans ?”

Dayanand Saraswati answered : “A person who has destroyed sinful attitudes through practice of yoga and devotion to God, and spends rest of the time helping others has satisfaction of happiness of soul. Such person does not even think of lust or such vices.”

5

Tolerance

Tolerance is defined as voluntary endurance of inconveniences pertaining to the mind, speech and body, in spirit of equanimity, so that the person attains purity of soul.

Training in Real Tolerance

Tolerance without purity of soul does not lead to attainment of the Supreme Reality.

A merchant may engage himself in business for profit without even taking food and drink for some time. A student may persistently keep awake studying during examination. These are a few practical examples of conventional tolerance. Such activities inspired by personal motives are

common.

Noble tolerance having higher human values dawns in life only when a person endures hardship for others, even at the cost of his own personal gain and work. During the practice of tolerance, one has to cultivate a spirit of equanimity and develop virtues like patience, calmness and forbearance. Again, it is a matter of voluntary endurance, because one engages oneself in it only for his own spiritual welfare.

When poor people or animals endure inconveniences such as hunger and thirst, cold and heat, insults and abuses, it is not out of volition but out of helplessness. The tolerance of this type of afflictions is merely through helplessness, dependence and compulsion. This is certainly not the real or noble tolerance.

External Forces Testing Tolerance

The spirit of tolerance of an aspirant is tested by a variety of distressing circumstances induced by worldly people, animal, life, natural calamities and so on. Ordinary people are busy in sensuous pleasures and therefore, have no time or faith in the activities of doing good deeds to others.

In the elementary and intermediate stages, an aspirant may experience non-cooperation even from his relatives and it may sometimes amount to clear opposition. The advanced aspirant is ironically referred to as a “bookworm” and is even insulted and banished from society. Some cruel and heartless persons may deprive the aspirant even of food and drink. Very often he finds that his path is obstructed by stones and thorns. He might even be physically mishandled by kicks, blows, sticks and other destructive attacks.

When Sadhana is practiced outside the house in lonely places such as a holy place, a forest or a garden; here also the aspirant may have to endure harassment from ants, flies, mosquitoes and other small insects. Occasionally, rats, squirrels, or even big animals may torture him. Apart from causing physical suffering, they can also disrupt the meditation by producing harsh sounds or frightening

movements. Natural forces can also act as sources of disturbance to the aspirant. These are excessive cold, unbearable heat, heavy rains and so on.

A disease in the body is also a natural calamity in which the aspirant is expected especially to preserve equanimity. This is the most direct, and difficult of all tests of his overall spiritual attainment. The aspirant, who reveals tolerance even in a diseased state of the body, is a real saint indeed.

High-Level Noble Tolerance

As the aspirant becomes more and more enlightened in the true concepts regarding the nature of the universe, he will rather blame himself for any distress or calamity than blame others. The mental repose of a real aspirant is not disturbed because he does not find fault with circumstances, individuals, or objects, but rather looks within himself for the same.

For acquiring true tolerance, one should, therefore, learn both the types of practice; i.e. acquiring true knowledge as well as practicing to endure the pains patiently even under adverse circumstances. Through the maturity of this two-fold practice, the aspirant attains the state of an emancipated Yogi (Siddha Yogi) i.e the state of a person of steady intellect (Sthitpragna) who has attained equanimity. This is the climax of spiritual Sadhana.

In addition to the natural afflictions that befall the highly advanced aspirants, they voluntarily test their own tolerance by sitting in meditation by a riverside in winter, on rocks of mountains in summer or by walking on thorny and gritty roads at other times. This is precisely how they impartially test the state of steady intellect (Sthitpragna Dasha) acquired by them.

Conclusion

Gold-dust obtained from a mine cannot become real pure gold, before it passes through processing in several furnaces. An iron-rod cannot be turned to the desired shape until it is made red hot. A clothe that is excessively dirty must be well-rubbed by the hands or

machine before it becomes thoroughly cleaned. Similarly, one cannot get over long standing wrong beliefs, knowledge and behavior without appropriately tormenting the soul and cultivating due forbearance.

It therefore becomes the duty of a person desiring liberation, to practice tolerance constantly at all stages. As one increasingly develops the art and science of forbearance, the inner strength is enhanced, and the aspirant conquers the path of self-knowledge & self-control and continues to reap the fruits in the form of advanced meditation (Samadhi). It is therefore necessary that we seek this virtue of tolerance that is the cornerstone of spiritual progress (Sadhana).

Glory of Tolerance

1. The path of tolerance with equanimity is extremely difficult but it still yields the best rewards.
2. Gold acquires greater and greater brightness as it is heated more and more in fire. Sugarcane is squeezed again and again and yet it does not give up its sweetness. Sandalwood is rubbed again and again and still it does not discard its coolness. In a similar manner, noble persons do not give up their nobility in spite of countless tough tests. They attain to the cherished goal with tolerance in a spirit of equanimity.
3. The diamond extracted from a mine has only limited brightness, but when it is washed, cleaned and faceted in a variety of shapes, then only does its brightness shine more. In a similar way, the aspirant has to pass through numerous tests before he becomes a saint.
4. Virtues of tolerance and benevolence constitute the basic nature of good and noble men. Trees bear heat and yield shade to others. The sandal tree gives coolness and fragrance to the edge of the axe that cuts it. Likewise, noble persons spread love and benevolence in spite of countless calamities that befall them.
5. Just as clouds use the salty water of the sea and yield a rain of

sweet water, in a similar way, noble persons suffer calamities and still shower goodness.

Living Examples of Tolerance

- (1) Shri Vishvanath Shastri was a great scholar and logician, who lived in the 18th century in the state of Bengal, India.

Shastriji was invited by other scholars for debate. Discourses and discussions commenced at the scheduled time. The deep learning and intellect as well as powerful arguments of the learned Shastriji silenced all other scholars. Their defeat became a certainty.

When no other way was left, one scholar opened his box of snuff and threw the snuff on the face of Shastriji. Shastriji took out his handkerchief, cleaned his face and said, "This is only a digression, let the discussion continue now."

The whole assembly was stunned. The opposing scholars (Pandits) had expected that Shastriji will get excited (angry) and dissolve the assembly. However, he pretended nothing happened and the session continued. The opposing scholars had no courage to continue the discourses and discussion further. They felt ashamed and bowed at the feet of Shastriji and begged his pardon.

We learn from this event of the life of Shastriji that great achievements are possible if we cultivate the spirit of tolerance.

- (2) Shri Ganeshprasad Varni, a famous Jain saint, lived about 100 years ago. In the early stage of his religious life, he had decided to travel to Jaipur on a pilgrimage. From Lalitpur in Jhansi district, he proceeded towards Khurai via Sonagiri. When he went beyond Sonagiri, he had with him very little money, one water pot, a small piece of cloth and some clothes on his body. As he reached Datia, he was left with absolutely no money. For two days he lived on rice and last day he had no money for even that. He approached a shopkeeper and requested, "Well friend! I would like to sell this umbrella.

The shopkeeper said, "I hope it is not a stolen one."

Varniji was dumb-founded and tears rolled down his eyes. The

shopkeeper showed no sympathy and said : “This is the price of your umbrella. After deducting for rice, you get this amount back.”

Varniji pleaded, “Well friend ! The umbrella is new. Please pay something more !”

The shopkeeper replied : “Take the amount or go elsewhere !” He was thus left with a small change. Varniji lived on rice for several days and took cooked food only when he came across a householder (Shravak) whom he knew and completed the pilgrimage.

Every great men attain the highest status only after gradually passing through such tough tests.

- (3) Mahatma Gandhiji’s original name was Mohandas K. Gandhi, bar-at-law. He was the greatest person of the 20th century who initiated the freedom struggle of India by non-violent means. He attained national and international fame by making India free from British rule on August 15, 1947. He was then designated as the “Father of the Indian Nation”.

Gandhiji was once travelling in district Champaran in the state of Bihar. He always traveled in a third class compartment of a train. Once he was on his way to Batia. A passenger got in, gave him a push and said, “You are sleeping at ease in the train, as if it is your own train ! Get up !” Gandhiji got up and sat by the side of that passenger, who started singing, “Noble indeed is Gandhiji. A great soul who helps the suffering !”

In the morning, the train reached Batia. Thousands of people gathered around his compartment with shouts of victory for Gandhiji. When that passenger realized that he had insulted Gandhiji, he wept bitterly and fell at his feet. Gandhiji consoled him and raised him up, as if nothing had happened.

6

Good Use of Time

It is a fact known to us all that with every minute of our life that passes, we are all moving nearer and nearer to death. Despite this, only a few persons think over this fact and make good use of this best opportune time with a view to really achieving the ultimate truth and divine bliss.

Time Devours All

Time moves on continuously. Nobody has the ability in this universe to stop it. There are now deep oceans where there were high mountains. There were empires of rulers whose cry made the earth shudder, today the dilapidated remains of their kingdoms are no longer regarded. The rich becomes

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penniless, the healthy turns diseased, youth is quickly overcome with old age. Physical charms and health come to an abrupt end and are often replaced by weakness and lusterless pallor. Thus, every existing object in this universe is suffering from the fright of the destructive dance (Tandavnrutya) of the horrifying demon that is Time.

Is there any remedy for this ? The answer is affirmative. There is a method to conquer this vast ocean of time. This can be achieved by a cautious and well planned use of every moment of our life. With every drop of water, the tank gets filled; with every pebble, a wall gets erected; with every brick a huge mansion is constructed. In a similar manner, the wise man who properly utilizes his time for higher purposes can accomplish advancement and prosperity in this life and the life hereafter.

Constant Alertness About Time

In our life, the desired goals are attained by good use of time. The student who works hard on his daily lessons, gets good grades; the housewife who gives up laziness and looks after the house, keeps her house neat and clean; the farmer who is constantly watchful of the crop sown, reaps a bumper crop. Thus, generally speaking, one can acquire wealth and high position by good use of time in day-to-day life.

In the path of salvation however, it is indispensable for an aspirant to be constantly alert and awake with regard to the good use of time. For this reason the saints have advised us to remember God every moment.

If one were to get immersed in Sadhana only for the time when one practices it, how can one attain higher pursuits ? No doubt, one must be completely immersed in Sadhana with all concentration during the time of the practice of Sadhana; but at other times also, the aim of self-betterment and self-purity are not to be lost sight of. "I must be alert and awake to see whether or not I pass my time in proper pursuits even when I am busy with other work in the morning or noon, evening or night, in the house or outside the

house, in a temple or holy place or in a place of self-study". Thus ponders the vigilant aspirant.

If the aspirant wants to form the excellent habit of utilizing his time well, he should in all stages of his development, keep a diary of spiritual pursuits. This will mean keeping a clear record of how his time passes everyday. By doing this, he will remain informed of the actual utilization of time, so that he can well plan the better use of time and thus improve upon the shortcomings in his life. Let us closely observe and analyze the lives of great men who have attained high status in this world. We will easily concede that the key to their astonishing success lay in the excellent use made of every moment of life which was at their disposal. If we respect time, time will respect us and help in higher achievements.

Glory of Good Use of Time

1. Every moment of human life is extremely precious. The moment that has passed away cannot be regained by any effort. Let a person therefore make his human life meaningful by the good use of every moment of life that God has presented to him.
2. "Time and Tide wait for none".
3. Water placed in one's palm, slowly trickles out and is eventually lost. In the same way, every moment of person's life passes and eventually life comes to an end. If therefore, we do not pay attention to purification of the Self, we would soon be in a state where all that we had has been lost.
4. One who knows the preciousness of every moment of life that he has acquired and makes its excellent use, (i) can conquer all calamities, (ii) can become the leader of all noble souls, (iii) can acquire the capability to write great scriptures (Shastras), (iv) is enabled to submit ever-new arguments in discourses and learned assemblies and (v) is endowed with the strength to shatter the whole chain of powerful enemies, namely "Karmas".
5. Our salutations to Time, for its rule that everything becomes

eventually antique (old).

6. Time does not wait to consider whether or not a person has completed the mission of his life. It just finishes those who come under its sway; regardless of whether he is an emperor or a beggar, a fool or a scholar, or anyone else.
7. Time should be conquered by continuous efforts, while learning should be acquired through the practice of humility.
8. The continuous ticking of a clock constantly reminds to a person that his life is being cut short with the passage of every moment. Let a person therefore, quickly accomplish all the noble deeds he wishes to do.
9. One who postpones the work of the morning till the evening, and the work of the evening to the next day, is adjudged a lazy, procrastinating fool. Such a person achieves no success in life and is lost.
10. Lord Mahavir preached to make good use of time to his first disciple, the great Gautam Swami. Let this fact make us alert about what we should do.
11. One who is vigilant of one's own spiritual progress, should be strictly regular in studying the scriptures, praising to holy people, devotion to God, practice of meditation, and in one's devotion to his preceptor.
12. One who wastes time, will himself be wasted away by time.

Living Examples of The Good Use of Time

(1) Shrimad Rajchandra (A.D. 1867 - 1901) was a great spiritual leader of 19th century. He attained the knowledge of his previous births at the age of 7. He had a remarkable memory and could attend 100 different events at a time ! He had supersensuous knowledge and he was a self-realized soul. He was considered as a spiritual guide by Mahatma Gandhi.

As a great scholar and spiritual prophet, he wrote very valuable

and subtle spiritual literature which is useful to all seekers of truth, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. He has followers and institutions in his name in many parts of western and southern India. He practiced meditation and scriptural studies in lonely places in many parts of Gujarat state of India. Monk Chaturlalji and monk Mohanlalji were two of the 7 ascetic disciples of Shrimad Rajchandra.

This event relates to Shrimad Rajchandra's life. Once Shrimadji asked monk Chaturlalji, "What have you acquired up to today from the day you became a recluse (monk) ?" Monk Chaturlalji submitted his experience and observation in these words, "In the morning we take tea brought as alms. Then, at the proper time we beg food (Gochari) and eat it. We go to sleep after recapitulating our sins (Pratikraman).

Shrimad Rajchandra said, "Getting tea and food as alms, taking these and sleeping; is this the right faith, knowledge, and character of the religion ?" He then asked the head monk Lalluji Maharaj, that the monks should pass their time in study and meditation and not waste any time in ordinary things. He asked him to see that all monks take food only once. He expected the monks not to bring tea and snuff without reason. He insisted that they study Sanskrit and pass their time in Sadhana.

Monk Mohanlalji pleaded, "Lalluji Swami and Devkaranaaji are of elderly age. How would it be possible for them to study ?" Shrimad replied, "Queen Victoria was old and yet she studied the languages of other countries." One should make use of his time in good things like study, understanding scriptures and meditation with a firm determination and discarding laziness."

(2) Shri Dayanand Saraswati is famed as a great upholder of Aryan Civilization in the 19th century. His native place was Tankara near Morbi in Gujarat state, India. He traveled around the country and established a new Hindu sect known as Arya Samaj.

Once he was in the city of Shahjahanpur in the state of Uttar Pradesh. He noticed that the employees of one big organization were

leaving their duties half an hour earlier. On seeing this, Swamiji said to the employees, “We have forgotten the great importance of time. If a doctor were to say, that the patient would have been saved if I had been called five minutes earlier, but now, the patient cannot be saved. It is here precisely that we realize the value and importance of time.”

(3) Let us note two more examples of how great men are alert about time.

a) During war, Napoleon personally gave orders to his commanders, on all fronts and he slept on horse-back making good use of the time.

b) Haider Ali was the Sultan (King) of Mysore in southern India in the 18th century. He was highly intelligent, a great warrior, and an able administrator. His grasping power was so acute that he used to hear the reports of ministers of different departments all at a time, during his morning duties. He took immediate decisions and issued necessary orders. Thus, he completed much of his work as a Sultan, just in the early morning.

7

Silence

Silence (Maun) is abandonment of speech, conversation etc. with right knowledge and spiritual advancement in view. This is a very important part of spiritual progress. It is being analyzed here, not only in its conventional meaning, but in a very wide perspective, so as to be useful to the aspirants.

Silence is resorted to for enhancement and to meditate on the doctrines heard from great preceptors or received from the study of scriptures. Aspirants of all levels can cultivate it according to their own capabilities. Aspirants in the elementary and middle stages should resort to as much control of speech as possible, so that physical and mental

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energy gets accumulated. This accumulated energy can now be advantageously applied for the purposes of Self-study and Self-analysis. The success in Sadhana can thus be accomplished more speedily by using this spared energy for spiritual progress which might have been otherwise wasted away in mundane pursuits of happiness.

Good Use of Power of Speech

Only the human soul can acquire the capacity of such intricate, highly disciplined and balanced speech. No other creature or being has the power of such highly developed speech. Such a power of speech as this which has been acquired by good deeds of past (Punya), should be well utilized as to be conducive to the welfare of one's own Self as well as of others.

If we are not in a position to help those suffering from various causes like diseases, distress, pangs of separation from kin or such other calamities, we could at least heartily console them by soft, soothing, beneficial and pleasing words. Such an excellent use of the power of speech can be rightly designated as 'silence', since such a use of speech is not for mundane purposes, but for benevolence of everyone concerned.

Abandonment of Pointless Talkativeness

We come across many people in society who are talkative. It is always wise not to initiate talk which is not conducive to our betterment, or any noble purpose. Criticizing others, using abusive words, indulging in idle or wicked talk, uttering words that offend and hurt others, busying oneself in self-praise, all these mean sheer waste of our power of speech. Persons endowed with a sense of discrimination, should abandon this with conscious effort.

Success of Silence

Since ancient time, silence is worshiped as an important component of spiritual discipline. Initially, the practice of this virtue may commence with some three hours of silence at noon time, say on Sunday or any other suitable day. This practice may be enhanced

by practising silence daily from 8.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. the next day. During these hours, the exceptions could be made for prayers, uttering a hymn of praise for adoration of God or some urgent work. The vow of continuous silence for 3 to 7 days is very helpful during the course of intensive meditation and scripture-writing. Thus is practiced the vow of silence by different aspirants, according to their circumstances and the various stages of their spiritual advancements.

Only through deep contemplation and the practice of silence, is it possible to become a genuine ascetic (monk). Spiritual progress (Samadhi) is attained only by right restraint on speech and breaking through the chain of indecision and doubts. Advanced aspirants should therefore, constantly praise Self-steadiness (Soul-sthirtha) together with silence during meditation.

Lord Mahavir, after the renunciation of the worldly life, observed silence for twelve and a half years. Mahatma Gandhi used to observe silence on every Monday. Maharshi Aurbindo observed silence for 17 years. Ramana Maharshi very often inspired those desirous of self-knowledge, to search after “Who am I ?” in a state of silence. He too passed much of his time in a state of silence. The immense utility of the practice of silence is thus witnessed in the lives of all these great men. In the present days, many monks resort to the practice of silence from evening to sunrise.

Conclusion

On the basis of factual evidence mentioned above, now the aspirant who has essentially understood the rarity, utility, and excellence of good speech will certainly embark upon the genuine practice of silence or only the scrupulous use of his speech. Through the medium of this practice, energy of the soul that was so far being externally wasted, is now fruitfully utilized in accomplishing control of the senses and the mind. This self-control will substantially contribute towards success in various stages of concentration of the mind by making it introvert, steady and eventually culminating in the highest transcendental meditation or an equanimous state (Nirvikalp Samadhi).

The practice of silence is thus of invaluable assistance in the experiment of internal conversation of the self with one's true Self.

Glory of Silence

1. Speech is great, but silence is greater . Silence is the holy temple of our divine thoughts. If speech is silver, silence is gold, if speech is human, silence is divine.

2. Silence is the best and the most unique art of conversation.

3. Silence is the best speech. If you must speak, speak minimum. Do not speak two words, if one is enough.

4. The ego gets wiped out in the state of silence. Once this happens, who will speak and who will ponder ? (all duals have disappeared).

5. Silence is an excellent means for self-betterment, but only rarely do we make good use of it.

Living Examples of Silence

(1) A Jain monk Lalluji Swami was one of the foremost of the devotees of Shrimad Rajchandra. He was the founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram at Agas near Anand in the state of Gujarat, India.

He passed the four months of the rainy season in 1893 at Bombay in order to have close contact with his spiritual teacher - Shrimad Rajchandra, who prescribed the reading and study of the verses of "Samadhi Shatak." On the first page of the book Shrimand wrote the famous Mantra, "the Jiva (soul) attains supreme knowledge (Keval Gnan) when one is merged in the nature of Soul (soul)."

At the end of four months, when the rainy season was nearly over, Lalluji Swami said, "I have no interest in external things. When shall I attain the stage of being identified with the Self ?"

Shrimad replied, "You want me to preach you?"

Lalluji said, "Yes, please."

In reply Shrimad Rajchandra remained silent. He thus preached

silence. It was with this preaching that Lalluji Swami went to another city, Surat, from Bombay. He observed silence for 3 years. In this observance of silence, the only exceptions were necessary conversation with other monks and spiritual discourses with Shrimad. Shri Lalluji Swami very often stated in his sermons that this observance of silence was of immense benefit to him.

(2) Mahatma Gambhirnath was a Bengali scholar and saint of the 19th century who settled in Himalay for his spiritual uplift (Sadhana).

Once Mahatma Gambhirnath was seated in meditation in the peaceful atmosphere of Himalay, some Bengali gentlemen visited him just with the idea of his Darshan (to see) and to have the benefit of noble company. They sat for a while and then humbly requested the Mahatma to deliver some preaching, for the uplift of their souls. The visitors submitted that they had come from far off distances and would feel unhappy if a sermon were not delivered. The Mahatma stated, "Observe and ponder."

Meeting with genuine Mahatma has one great reward. Our hearts gets filled to the brim with their holy, simple and blissful personality. Their silence asks us to open our internal eyes and devotedly to have Darshan of Soul God in this temple of the body. Thus silence consists of the purport of countless scriptures.

(3) The railway train was running at full speed from Calcutta to Delhi. In one compartment, two British passengers were talking in English. Pointing at one monk (Sadhu), traveling in the same compartment, one British passenger was telling the other, "Look, what a deception ! With such youthful age, healthy body, and full capacity to work, this man became monk to get free food and to loiter anywhere. There are thousands of such monks in this country and people feed them in blind faith."

Criticism of this sort went on for a long time, but the monk (Sanyasi) sitting on the opposite seat was pondering deeply with a calm posture.

When the train arrived at one station and halted, the station

master saw the monk, bowed down before him and asked in English, “What can I do in your service, Sir ?”

The Sanyasi answered in English, “One glass of water will be enough. I want nothing else.”

The two British passengers observed that the Sanyasi spoke in such pure English. They felt surprised. They never knew that the Sanyasi was educated. They had abused the Sanyasi so much and still there was not a word by way of reaction. His posture was the same, full of happiness as before.

The passengers inquired of him, “Well sir, why did you not react to our criticism ?” He replied, “Brothers, I remain engrossed only in the thoughts of my life’s work. I do not enter into any kind of disputes.” The peaceful posture and Sadhana of the vow of silence brought about a lot of regard on part of those two British passengers.

This Sanyasi was Swami Vivekanand, the chief disciple of the great monk Shri Ramkrishna Paramhans. He was a great socio-religious leader of the 19th century. He became famous for his unique speech in the World Parliament of Religions in A.D. 1893 in Chicago, U.S.A.

Control of Taste

Out of our five sense organs, only the tongue is entrusted with two functions : speech and tasting of different flavors (Ras). Just as there is a peculiarity of the dual sphere of special activities of this organ of sense, so also there is a unique peculiarity in achieving control over it. It is said that if only the tongue is brought under control, then the control over all other sense organs becomes easy.

The voluptuousness of the worldly person regarding to this organ of taste appears to be almost universal. This organ, only 3 inches in length, has brought the majority of the living beings in the world under its rule. Human beings, animals, even

insects, are all under its spell.

In modern times the abuse of this organ of taste has crossed all limits. Numerous and varied items are served in the dishes in the non-vegetarian meals which are prepared from fish, frogs, rats, cockroaches and countless carnivorous animals and insects. No big animal has been spared. Innocent animals, such as sheep, goats, ducks, hens, hares, pigs, deers, cows, bulls, buffaloes and horses, are slaughtered by the thousands. The root cause of all this cruel killing is only to cherish man's voluptuousness regarding the taste of his tongue.

Vegetarians also do not lag behind in the voluptuousness of the tongue. Thousands of new items are being processed and invented. These are such as those with pepper and spices, varied fried items, pickles, sauces, and sweets.

For an aspirant, simple and health-nourishing food serves the purpose. In its preparation, long time is not required and there is no elaborate processing. It is possible to observe the vow of limited eating (Unodari) and such a diet is conducive to peace of mind. An aspirant will not be tempted to eat like a pig, and it will be possible for him to resort to various spiritual practices with ease and peace.

Experiment In Control of Taste

In the initial stages, an aspirant should restrict the number of items of food. This will save him from the hankering love of unnecessary items like sauces, papad, pickles, fried grams and so on. In the next stage, let him resolve to give up for 6 or 12 months or some other time limit, salty, sour or sweet items. This will slowly lead to the success of penance (Tap) named abandonment of taste (Rasparityag). The tongue should not become licentious and physical health should not get spoiled for these purposes; discriminative abandonment of tastes becomes very useful to the aspirant.

Very tasty and spicy foods are usually consumed excessively. This will often produce several diseases of the stomach, intestines, liver and the tongue. In addition, sleep and laziness get enhanced,

wrathful activities increase and the means of God-realization like Self-study, chanting prayers, meditation, devotional singing and the like, cannot be practiced with due earnestness or concentration.

Even the practice of non-violence and celibacy face several difficulties. The mind remains predominantly occupied with the ideas and analysis of what is to be prepared, how, where, at what time and under what circumstances the food will be consumed and so on. Under these conditions, how will the mind remain applied or get fixed in remembrance and devotion to God and Self-study ?

It is obvious therefore, that persons endowed with discrimination can have no voluptuousness of food. We waste a lot of time, much energy and incur great expense in the preparation of certain tasty dishes and the taste lasts only while the item is in the mouth. Once the item goes beyond the palate, it has only one final shape - it turns to stool or other waste of the body. Discriminating persons should therefore be cautious about all matters regarding preparation and consumption of food and must apply a sense of propriety and due discrimination in the subject.

Elephants (touch), fish (taste), bees (smell), butterflies (sight), and deer (sound) lose their lives by submitting to only one of those senses. If an intelligent human being (with 5 senses) also behaves this way, then what is so uniquely superior about him ? Would that person not be enduring results of the voluptuousness ? Considering this again and again, the aspirant accepts balanced amount of simple and nutritious meal on a regular basis.

Glory of Control of Taste

1. When a person with proper food habits resorts to spiritual activity (Yog Sadhana), all his sufferings end.
2. Food is for life and not life for food.
3. Well planned and regular food habits are conducive to rapid spiritual development.
4. The purpose of human life is neither to inflate one's possessions

nor to fulfill sensual pleasures, but to achieve higher values in life.

Living Examples of Control of Taste

- (1) Two persons named Tribhovanbhai and Maneklalbhair were close and devoted disciples of Shrimad Rajchandra, a great spiritual saint.

One day Tribhovanbhai, Maneklalbhair and other aspirants were having dinner with Shrimad Rajchandraji. When different vegetables were being served, Maneklalbhair refused because he had his vow (Vrat). Then sauce followed and he rejected that also. Then several other items were being served but he accepted some and rejected others. At last came rice-milk (Dudhpak). As it was about to be served to Maneklalbhair, Shrimad Rajchandraji interrupted and said, "Do not serve rice-milk to him. He wants to inflate his self-esteem by abandoning small items. Actually, he does not want to discard items that nourish the taste."

Real abandonment of taste of the tongue is to discard or limit the item that is very much to one's liking. Only such persons are heroes (Tyagvir).

- (2) A Jain monk Acharya Shantisagarji was the pioneer of the Ascetic order among Digamber Jains. He did great penance and had thousands of disciples among Digamber Jains in India. He ended his life by voluntary renunciation of food in 1955. This procedure is known as Sallekhna.

In 1930, he stayed for four months during rainy season at Lalitpur city in Madhya Pradesh, India. There were also 12 other Jain monks who stayed there. Several householders were preparing food for them.

In Lalitpur, fruits like oranges and grapes were costly because these were imported from Delhi. When Acharya learnt of this, he put this idea very humbly before the other monks; "I will not beg for or eat from today to the end of the 4 months of the rainy season, fruits, green vegetables and all tasty food. Also it is proper to discard fruits and green vegetables during the rainy season."

All other monks took the same vow to abandon fruits and green vegetables following him.

Thus, two things were accomplished by Acharya. The spirit of abandonment (Tyag) on the part of monks went up, and ordinary householders also could supply the food to monks because there was no need now of bringing costly fruits. An atmosphere of the proper spirit of religion and peace spread on all sides by this abandonment of taste of the tongue and discrimination in food.

- (3) Maharaj Nrusinhdas was a great austere saint of the state of Gujarat, India. He lived in the early 20th century in the city of Ahmedabad. He ate only millet-cake and vegetables and did not use anything else in his food.

There is a temple dedicated to God named Shri Jagannathji in Ahmedabad. Traditionally many monks (Tyagi Sadhus) lived at the temple. Shri Nrusinhdasji, the predecessor of the present Shri Ramharshdasji, spread the fame of the temple for more than 30 years by unity, peace and service to others. Many cows are looked after in the temple, and guests are regularly served rice-milk and other sweet items.

Shri Nrusinhdasji Maharaj, by his vow, ate only after guests and residents of the temple were fed. He daily and regularly took only millet-cake and vegetable (Bhaji). In spite of all requests of the worshipers and inconvenience due to old age, he took this simple, tasteless, uniform food until he died. This gives us food for thought with regard to the abandonment of taste of the tongue for the whole life by great souls.

9

Equanimity

Every person in his lifetime almost constantly experiences and suffers from pairs of duals like happiness and sorrow, respect and disrespect, interest and lack of interest, cold and heat, etc. Unruffled by all these, when one tries to live in a spirit of peace with a balanced mind, one is said to practice equanimity.

In the present context, it is proposed to think over and analyze the subject, also from a philosophical point of view. Real equanimity can be attained at a very high level of spiritual development. Its genuine attainment is possible only when an aspirant has passed through various

stages of spiritual progress (Sadhana).

Implementing The Means of Equanimity

Genuine equanimity cannot dawn in the life of an aspirant until the knowledge of the Self (Soul) is attained. The very basis of true equanimity is pure thoughts and feelings, which in turn, are dependent on Self-knowledge. Now, if knowledge of the Self is to be acquired, a clear distinction between the Self and non-Self with its practice in day-to-day life is imperative. The three best means to accomplish this task are :

1. Company of noble persons and saints.
2. Cultivation of specific virtues.
3. Self-contemplation (meditation).

Each of these means should be grasped thoroughly. As the synergistic combination of the above three is practiced, discriminative power evolves, resulting in Self-contemplation and Self-realization. With that, the Sadhana of equanimity develops more and more. It is thus necessary that every aspirant cultivates universal friendship with all living beings, becomes indifferent to sensual objects of the world, gives up evil thought processes, and attains equanimity by vision and contemplation of the absolute Reality.

When a saintly aspirant attains this state and progresses further, he experiences unique inner peace and oneness with his soul. This is the best and the most praiseworthy achievement of a spiritual life known as equanimity.

Knowledge and detachment are the horses of the chariot of this great hero. Humility is the charioteer, discrimination is his body guard, forgiveness is his armor, patience is the shield, austerity and self-control are the bow and arrow, and pure intellect is his sword.

When the well-organized army of the well-equipped soldier attacks the fort of the enemies, their armies break down and run away in the very first attack. As all the enemies, such as passion, arrogance, anger, greed, lust and jealousy, start running helter-skelter, their

commander-in-chief, that is, infatuation gets absolutely confused. In no time, he is compelled to surrender to this great soldier, the victorious aspirant, and accepting the disgraceful defeat, flees away for ever from the battle-field.

Thus every aspirant has to put in great and firm effort in order to win over his original abode of equanimity. This equanimity is known by several names such as equality, quietude, Samadhi, Yog, tranquility of mind, Nirvikalp Samadhi, the state of Self-experience and Self-Realization.

An Equanimous Personality

The vision and speech of the person who has attained equanimity undergo a basic and complete transformation. Consequently, divinity is reflected in him at all places, at all times and in all activities of his life. In his heart, he experiences that all living beings in the world are alike to his own Self, and this feeling & experience of his life are reflected in all his day-to-day activities.

As he has realized his own Self (Soul) to be the best and the highest, he experiences no attraction or attachment towards worldly objects. He might be garlanded with flowers or shoes, respected or insulted, given a gold or a copper coin, sandal or cow dung may be applied to his body - with all these, he is neither pleased nor displeased. To him, a residence in a palace or a crematorium, forest or a magnificent house, are just the same.

However he prefers to reside in a lonely place where his spirit of non-attachment remains undisturbed and intact. There he experiences constantly the proximity of his true and real Self in the form of true knowledge and divine bliss. He experiences his supreme Self repeatedly. The hard fact is that there are no words to describe the loftiness and greatness of this superhuman being with magnanimous and divine knowledge. His real personality is far beyond speech and mind.

These are grand ascetic persons endowed with equanimity, whose only resort is the soul and who are liberation (Moksha) incarnate.

The land on which they place their foot-steps, verily becomes a land of austerity (Tap) and therefore it becomes a place of pilgrimage.

Their presence is always surrounded by an atmosphere of peace, equanimity, friendship and sacredness. It becomes almost magical atmosphere surcharged with such holiness that even wicked persons and violent animals give up their wickedness and violence and adopt a spirit of unity and friendship. The real aspirants who are inspired by the keen and pure desire to seek knowledge and bliss of the Self, resort to their vicinity and company. There is no surprise, if they achieve eternal bliss. We, the ordinary people of the world, deserve only to take the dust of their feet on our heads with a spirit of great reverence.

Glory of Equanimity

1. May my soul work hard to attain a spirit of equanimity which is possible by abandoning attachment to the body and by becoming completely detached from all desires, passions and enjoyments.
2. All worldly desires get dissipated by resorting to the spirit of equanimity; ignorance vanishes and the mind comes under control. Let one therefore, be devoted to equanimity.
3. By resorting to the spirit of equanimity, one feels steady happiness, attains the state of eternity and shatters the bonds of Karmas.
4. The Yogi who is steady and firm in equanimity, feels that this world is mad, misguided, deluded and asleep.
5. The state of the soul, bereft of infatuation and agitation is the secret of Supreme Reality; again it is only that which is called equanimity that can lead to liberation (Nirvan or Moksha). The noble souls therefore worship and take recourse in this equanimity which is of the nature of supreme righteousness and eternity.

Living Examples of Equanimity

- (1) Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak was a lawyer and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi who significantly contributed to the freedom struggle of India. He was famous as a great patriot, scholar, and philanthropist. Utter devotion to the country, simplicity, modesty, religious learning, study of the scriptures and many other virtues made his life full of fragrance.

One day he was busy solving an important problem in his office. The solution was not easy because the problem was highly complex. Deep concentration was necessary. At home, his own son was critically ill. A servant arrived and told him that his son was in a critical condition and so he should run home. However, Tilak was busy with his work.

After some time, his partner himself came and told, “Well Tilak, your son is in a very serious state. Please go home immediately !”

Tilak replied, “Well ! In the morning I have explained everything to the doctor. He is treating him. What good can I do ?” The partner left.

When Tilak returned home after completing his work, his son was dead. Tilak changed his clothes and prepared to go to the crematorium as if nothing had happened.

Not becoming overwhelmed with sorrow on the death of his eldest son was no small matter. Only rare persons who constantly practice equanimity can keep such great equanimity.

- (2) About 100 years ago in the state of Orissa, India, a robber named Ramkhan, had spread terror. Nobody dared even to speak his name. People were terror stricken and used to tremble by just a reference to his name. Every one wished to get freed from the terror of this robber.

Mahatma Harnath was a great saint of the area. He gave courage to the frightened people and said, “Well brothers, no sinner is bad, only sin is bad.” With these words, he took the track into the forest

where this terrorizing robber lived.

With an extremely peaceful composure, detached, fearless vision and the aura of celibacy, the Mahatma proceeded to the forest where the bandit lived. As he reached the place of his residence, the eyes of Ramkhan fell on the Mahatma and he was immediately transformed. The emotions of the robber to whom killing people was just a game, were transformed. He said, "O great saint ! I have committed countless crimes. Now you have come and with you has come the time of my uplift." With these words, he fell down at the feet of the Mahatma.

The Mahatma raised the robber and embraced him with all love. He said, "Well brother, all sins are destroyed by resorting to the path of God. This leads a person to Supreme eternal delight. May you therefore resort to atonement of your misdeeds, improve your life and get engrossed in the adoration of the path of God." Ramkhan became a monk and passed the rest of his life in uttering the name of God.

This shows that even the lowest of the low can get uplifted by the life of those souls endowed with equanimity and sinners get purified.

(3) Mahatma Gandhi looked upon Shrimad Rajchandra as his spiritual preceptor. Shrimad Rajchandra had a diamond business in Bombay, but often he used to visit small towns for Yogic practices.

In 1954, he came to Kavitha, a small town in the state of Gujarat for his spiritual progress (Sadhana) in seclusion. He preached twice during the daytime but resorted to silence in the evening.

As the night fell, he used to sit in meditation all alone in the adjoining fields or on the river bank. He put on just one cloth over his body even in the severest cold. In this state of meditation mosquitoes used to bite him; but he tolerated this with equanimity. Mostly, he would not even be conscious of the mosquito bites, but the fact betrayed itself when red swellings appeared on his body.

In this manner, Shrimad Rajchandra revealed great soul force by resorting to equanimity even under adverse circumstances, and in the end achieved very high Samadhi. Such is the superhuman power of equanimity.

10

Study of The Self

Background

Study of Self is a basic necessity in various stages of spiritual progress (Sadhana). It is supreme and indispensable. It yields immediate reward and is considered to be the guide to all other means. All the preceptors of various schools of philosophy in the world, have accepted its unique importance. Each one of them has given it its due place in the methods of Sadhana propounded by them.

From the absolute point of view, the fruit of engaging in Self-studying is Self-realization. To obtain the benefits of Self-study, association with another Self-realized soul, or carrying out his spiritual instructions, is necessary. Three stages

can be considered in the development of the Sadhana of Self-study.

1. Obtaining time for study.
2. Careful study of scriptures.
3. Attainment of the supreme state of Self-study, by continuously practicing contemplation of the acquired knowledge.

In the first stage, the aspirant requires contact with the noble and learned persons. If his mind gets firm in the conviction that he wants to indulge in Self-study, he will, on his own, spare an hour or two from his busy worldly life from business or service or domestic work. He should then put his efforts in acquiring knowledge in this spare time, and gradually go on creating greater and greater leisure by resorting to a secluded life and create more and more interest in advancing his scriptural studies.

In the second stage, study of good scriptures means those that lead to higher spiritual knowledge. If one studies the scriptures in the proper order, as laid down by the experienced and learned saints, greater benefit will be derived.

During the course of this study, one can constantly or occasionally stay in an Ashram with a learned saint. He can also strengthen his knowledge by reading, writing, thinking, memorizing, pondering, and discussing with others. These different methods of studies, when combined harmoniously with joy, lead to great advancement of knowledge quickly. As the knowledge acquired in this way is methodical, purposeful, useful, blissful and acquired in the presence of and under the guidance of an enlightened saint, it leads the aspirant to a great height of spiritual progress in a very short time.

In the third stage, further progress is required to be made by practicing in life the principles, which have been learnt so far. This leads to the experience and conviction that Soul is pure consciousness, and its nature is truth, knowledge and bliss (Sachchidanand). Once this happens, all impure and sorrowful thoughts are discarded. The aspirant realizes that passion (Kam), anger (Krodh) and infatuation (Moh) are doors to hell, he cultivates the virtues of non-attachment,

forgiveness and contentment.

Whether in day-to-day activities such as bathing, taking food, business, worldly work, family relations, etc. or in spiritual activities such as devotion, association with saintly persons, Self-study, worship, daily spiritual program, meditation, etc. practice of the continued divine awareness should be cultivated. The feeling that I am an “Aspirant Soul” should be persevered with such intensity that life becomes remolded and the fragrance of virtues spreads in each activity of our life, and the whole life becomes propitious to ourselves as also to others.

If we could accomplish this successfully, Self-knowledge (Soul-Gnan), Self-meditation (Soul-Samadhi) and Self-joy (Soul-Anand) will surely manifest themselves; because of the principle that the appropriate causes having been provided, the invariable association must manifest.

Glory of Engagement In Self-Study

1. We cannot make headway on the path of salvation without knowing what it is. We must therefore know the right path through the sermons of a learned preceptor or through the study of the sublime scriptures.
2. True renunciation (Tyag) is not possible without a proper understanding of what is to be given up and what is to be retained.
3. Real compassion cannot be actually practiced without proper knowledge. Knowledge is, therefore, forerunner of the practice of real compassion.
4. In this world of ours nothing is more sacred than knowledge.
5. Acquisition of the best of things is not possible without best efforts. Hence with a firm determination, a person must constantly cultivate the vow of Self-study (Swadhyay). He should not give up Self-study in spite of difficulties, only such a noble and great aspirant attains high state.

6. By following this method and also by constantly engaging in study, one attains concentration in Swadhyay. Self-realization and equanimity of the soul dawn on their own in this very life as the reward par excellence of Swadhyay.
7. Indulgence in Self-study reveals countless virtues. One becomes conscious about truth and untruth, intellect blooms, doubts are set at rest, the grasp of Reality dawns and the habit to resort to illogical attitude leaves. The fame of such an aspirant spreads far and wide.
8. Pride, anger, negligence, disease, and laziness are the five main obstacles in acquiring of knowledge (Vidya). With due diligence and care, the aspirant should avoid these and exert constant efforts to acquire knowledge.
9. Just as humility is essential for acquisition of knowledge, similarly even after knowledge is acquired, it shines forth only through humility. A really learned person is always humble and ever continues to be so.

Living Examples of Self-Study

- (1) About 150 years ago, Maharaja Jagatesh of Jaipur (Rajasthan, India), was just, impartial and devoted to his people. Many learned scholars visited his court and were duly honored. One of his ministers was Shri Jaichand Chhavda, a scholar of great merit. He had a son named Nandlalji, who was also working for State. Both father and son were famous and high ranking scholars. Their knowledge of the scriptures was shining forth with their spiritual Sadhana. They have contributed uniquely by translating Jain scriptures in old Hindi language.

Once, a great scholar (Pandit), who had defeated many other scholars in different parts of India, arrived in Jaipur and made the following announcement, "If nobody enters into discussion on the scriptures (Shastras) with me within five days, I shall take myself as victorious in this city and State."

The king was puzzled. No scholar in the city came forward to

enter into discussion with this outsider. On the advice of some, the Maharaja approached Shri Jaichand and requested him to save the honor of the State. Shri Jaichand sent his son Nandlal for discussion with the Pundit.

Nandlal defeated the Pandit easily. The king decided to honor the father and the son in public. On learning this, Shri Jaichand told the Maharaja, "I do not believe in disputation but I arranged this dialogue on the scriptures only to save the prestige of our State. I do not need any certificate of honor. If you are really pleased with me, kindly relieve me two hours earlier from my daily duties to the State. This will enable me to devote more time to my spiritual progress and study of authentic scriptures, so that I can make my life more meaningful."

He was a real scholar. His detachment and indulgence in Self-study prove that he was a man of great spiritual heights. Let us give honor to this great man Shri Jaichand Chhavda !

(2) In 18th century, Pandit Shri Ramnath, after finishing his studies in Logic and Philosophy settled near the town called Navdwip in the state of Bengal, India. He taught students religion and literature. He did not accept any salary or other benefits from the State. One day his wife told him that she had no wheat flour to make bread (Chapatis). He replied, "Cook whatever is available in the house." She cooked rice and boiled tamarind leaves. He praised how delicious the meal was.

Maharaja Shivchandra of Krishnanagar heard about this great Pandit and his economic condition; and invited him to the palace. But Panditji never visited. At last the king visited him and inquired, "Panditji, do you have any inconvenience ? Is there any way I can be helpful to you or your family or deliver household goods ?"

Panditji answered, "As far as my household goods are concerned, inquire with my wife !"

The king went in the house, bowed to the lady and inquired the same way adding he will consider himself lucky to supplement

any need. The lady in a very dignified way indicated, that their needs were more or less met with. The king bowed to this detached personality of the lady and left. The next day he sent various items to the family but they returned everything except provision for three days. The king and the citizens worshiped the couple in their hearts.

- (3) In the year 1927, at a farewell function at Kashi University, the professor of Logic inquired of all graduating students, "What is the aim of your life ?"

Someone wanted to become a judge, someone a college professor or a principal etc. However, when it was the turn of Sumeruchandra Diwakar, he replied, "The ultimate goal of my life is to attain godliness". The professor said, "Look, how high is the goal of life of this Jain student ! His feeling is that spiritual attainment is more blissful than worldly status!" The inspiring words of the professor had a magical effect on the minds of the students.

Shri Sumeruchandra is today a life-long celibate, busy in the devotion of the Goddess of Learning. He has propagated the Aryan (traditional Hindu) culture and the Jain religion (Dharma) in many countries.

Even today, at the age of 89 years, he is busy studying the scriptures and has written many authentic and scholarly books and articles. Some time back Justice Dwivedi sought the meaning of the word "JAIN" from him and he replied, a 'JAIN' is one who is endowed with the following virtues :

J = Just - he loves justness

A = Affectionate - he is really affectionate

I = Introspective - he is the tester of his inner-self

N = Noble - his dealings are always gentlemanly.

11

Restraint of Wantonness

The general meaning of wantonness is self-willed and uncontrolled behavior. It is only when one follows in day-to-day life the sublime instructions of the highly virtuous and enlightened saint or preceptor that one can control this wantonness. Thus by controlling this wantonness, one is drawn to the propitious path.

In general, the human mind has a downward inclination. Since time immemorial the human soul is habituated to be under the slavery of the five senses and the mind. The soul is so much addicted

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to the mind, senses, and evil company that it has absolutely no idea of the utter loss of its independence.

However, we are extremely lucky that with the grace of pious and learned saints, we can defeat this wantonness with great effort and diligence. This will lead the soul to understand and experience its own bliss.

Practice of Control of Wantonness

For properly controlling wantonness, two things are required; Right Knowledge and Right Preaching.

Let us question ourselves : Can we be really happy by wanton behavior ? Or is wantonness the real means to be happy ? Thinking even from the social point of view, good social order and peace cannot be established by fostering wantonness. The whole society would suffer from anarchy, distress, disquiet and lack of order, if it fails to adopt certain good and moral rules of conduct and a righteous way of life. One should, under the circumstances, think of the likely consequences of such conduct at the individual level as well.

Thinking from the spiritual point of view, we should concede that what is right at the family and social level, is also true at the individual level. No individual would be happy by becoming slave of his mind, five senses, and behaving in a wanton manner.

Considered from any viewpoint, one who behaves unrighteously is unhappy, his mind is restless and his personality bewildered, frightened, and dissatisfied. We should therefore be convinced that the happiness and peace cannot be attained by wanton behavior.

Once we are convinced that wantonness is the root of all sufferings, it now becomes necessary to consider the ways and means through which it can be controlled.

For this, our conduct should be guided by the right type of discrimination. Let us follow the sublime and just teachings of those great saints of ancient and modern times who have acquired genuine happiness and peace. Let us associate ourselves with them, wherever

possible. Slowly but surely this brings about the developmental and sublime change in our life, so that several good virtues become manifest in us. Once this is achieved, true faith and true awakening of the Self become firmly accomplished. With this, wantonness starts vanishing. Thus the control of wantonness is accomplished easily with the above efforts.

Obstacles In The Control of Wantonness

When a person thinks, “I am great, I am learned, no one is equal to me,” and so on, he will not be able to progress spiritually in his life. Because such thinking results from false pride in his life. Success is possible only if one becomes impartial and patiently ponders over the appropriateness of such thinking. Then one will realize that in all walks of life, far greater number of smart persons have been born than himself. This will dissipate one’s pride of family, knowledge, worship, fame, body, handsomeness, wealth, youth and various similar achievements.

Thus one develops humility, a spirit of adoption of virtues, and a compassionate heart. Now wantonness will leave him. Once one abandons the path of wantonness, all vices start disappearing from within in a short time and with the rise of so many virtues, one can achieve supreme happiness. Rightly, therefore, it is said, “To follow the preachings of the great and pious saints is the real religion (Dharma), and it is the real austerity (Tap).”

Glory of Control of Wantonness

- (1) “Man can surely win liberation by controlling wantonness. Thus, salvation has been achieved by infinite souls.” So said Jain Tirthankars (Gods).
- (2) The progress in the path of salvation is directly in proportion to the degree of suppression of wantonness.
- (3) If a person is led away by uncontrolled five senses and mind, he will suffer from diseases, poverty and dishonor in this life and the pains of low level birth, such as animal, bird, hell, trees and so on in the life hereafter.

- (4) Let a person follow the preachings of a noble preceptor to enhance his fitness to be firmly established on the path of liberation.
- (5) To abandon bad habits, to take no interest in useless and trivial matters, to give up bad deeds with conscious efforts, to keep the mind engaged in feelings, speech, and deeds that will make life rich, noble and pure - all these are practical ways and means of avoiding wantonness. Thus one attains purity as well as sublimation in life.
- (6) A person always falls prey to wantonness, if he behaves in such a way as to scoff at the sublime teachings and commandments of the preceptor, and not being afraid of mundane worldly existence. Every command of the wise is conducive to our betterment. Let a person not, therefore, ponder over the high and low of it, or quarrel with insistence about it. Wantonness is healed only if one realizes that every command of the wise is blissful. If wantonness is healed, the soul (person) attains bliss.

Living Examples of Control of Wantonness

- (1) Shrimad Rajchandra had written his personal diary. He gave it to his disciple, monk Shri Lalluji to copy down some useful part of it. Shri Lalluji copied that part plus a few other parts which he found useful. He had thought of obtaining the permission for the other parts in the morning because his vows as a monk did not permit him to go out at night to see Shrimad Rajchandra.

Next morning, Shri Lalluji placed all the copied pages and diary before Shrimad Rajchandra and said, "As it was night, I could not come to get your permission. I have copied from the diary a few more pages than you permitted." Shrimad Rajchandra kept his diary and all the copied pages in his own custody. He gave nothing back to Shri Lalluji. Lalluji repented of it and narrated everything before Ambalalbai, a householder pupil of Shrimad Rajchandra. He too scolded him for copying extra pages without permission. Shri Lalluji

requested Shrimad Rajchandra again through Ambalalbai to return him the copied pages. He then handed over to Lalluji all that he had copied. This was one of the ways in which Shrimad Rajchandra revealed the glory of control of wantonness and preached again and again to resort to self control under the orders of the preceptor.

- (2) Bhudev Mukhopadhyay was a great man in the state of Bengal, India during the last century. He was a great scholar who specialized in philosophy and logic. He was a strict disciplinarian and he had brought up his family with his traditional cultural way of life. He had a seven years old grandson named Somdev.

Once, when travelling to Calcutta, they were at the Hoogli railway station. The grandfather asked the grandson to sit on a bench on the platform and said, "Be seated till I come. Do not get up." The grandfather was busy arranging about the luggage. The train arrived and all the passengers took their seats in the train. The grandfather suddenly remembered Somdev. There he was, seated on the bench while his eyes were searching for his grandfather. Immediately the grandfather ran and lifted him into the train. Then he asked, "Well, dear boy, why did you not come on your own to sit in the train?" Somdev replied, "Under your orders, I sat there. How could I get up before you came?" All hearts were elated by the boy's firmness in obeying orders.

- (3) George Washington, the first President of the USA was renowned for regularity and discipline in his life. He was firm and insistent on accomplishing a fixed amount of work at a fixed time.

Once he had arranged a party at his house to welcome the newly elected members of the American Congress (Parliament). The members did not come in time and therefore Washington started his dinner ! When the members arrived, they were amazed by it. Then Washington said, "Well friends, I am so sorry, but my butler serves my dinner at a fixed time because he knows that his master takes his meals at a fixed hour."

With this, Washington continued with his dinner and all the members joined him, realizing the importance of punctuality and discipline.

12

Detachment

Detachment means true knowledge of the objects of the world through right vision. This realistic knowledge brings discriminative power to differentiate between the Self and the non-Self. An aspirant who realizes such vision and discriminative power, experiences very little attachment towards worldly objects and gradually attains equanimity and complete detachment.

Looking from one point of view, detachment is easy to accomplish, while from another point of view, it is difficult to acquire. It is easy because one has to recognize one's own true Self and its nature as it really is and in this recognition, no

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other external agencies can possibly interfere; no one can hide it from one's true Self.

Now looking from the other angle, it is difficult to acquire because in the normal course, the desire for attaining truth and its preparation usually arise in later years of life.

As the aspirant remains acquainted throughout the early years of life with false and perverse beliefs and practices, it becomes difficult for him to accomplish and accommodate different beliefs and practices. Just as it is difficult to prepare the background of any new activity, so is also the case in the practice (Sadhana) of detachment.

However one has to face and get over the evil effects of the influences of countless previous births and has to implant new effects of "Sat" (truth) and "Soul" during the newly acquired mode of life. This, indeed, is not easy.

Three stages of the success of detachment may be recognized from the aspirant's point of view.

1. Detachment In The State of One Striving For Liberation

Just as the aspirant who has acquired knowledge of the Self, travels on the path of liberation, the same way one who desires liberation also travels on the path of liberation with the help from true saints. He regularly professes right faith.

He can accelerate his pace of progress on the path of liberation when he remains in association with an inspiring and highly enlightened preceptor. In this association, he is induced to practice non-attachment, remain active and be regular in devotion and Self-study. He subdues his miserliness and enhances his divine love for gods, spiritual masters, and religion. Such an aspirant spends more time in the company of the nobles and the virtuous aspirants. He spends less time at his job, business, family and bodily requirements.

Furthermore, by developing moderation, contentment, simplicity, impartiality, humility, the practice of equal regard for all life, love

and acknowledgement of virtues, regular food-habits, and allied virtues in life, he contemplates deeply on sublime teachings and practices the discrimination of the Self and the non-Self and thus tries to establish himself in a state of self-repose and awakeness.

2. Detachment Coupled With Self-Knowledge

The aspirant in this category has one great achievement to his credit. He has annihilated all ignorance and illusions, as also the Self-obscuring Karma through direct Self-realization. The feeling, therefore, that “I am Soul - the pure knower and the seer”, is not a matter only of faith but also of direct experience. He is delighted, his doubts are dissipated, he is pious and fearless, and he has attained the state of Self-realization which is his ultimate goal and abode of respite.

Though he is rich in several sublime virtues which have helped him in Self-realization, he still pursues with due enthusiasm the attainment of omniscience - the highest achievement in the universe. Glimpses of inner divinity are reflected in every aspect of his life but to visualize them truly, a high state of dispassion or a true inner knowledge conferred by an enlightened preceptor is essential. Such a soul firmly continues to enhance his detachment daily by accomplishing increasing discrimination and dispassion.

3. Detachment of The Enlightened Seclusive Aspirant

This stage represents the culmination of genuine practice (Sadhana) of detachment. Now that all the attachments to the worldly objects, to the family and even to one's own body have been severed completely, the time is ripe for the Aspirant to be merged in the practice of transcendental meditation (Nirvikalp Samadhi).

As an external, concurrent and collaborative means to achieve this end, the aspirant should devote to and find more time for silence (Maun), stay in seclusion and meditation (Dhyan), in deep study and contemplation of the subtle realities, and in adoption of a very simple life. All these constitute the various traits of the aspirant of this status. Out of utter compassion, this great man occasionally

imparts his sublime teachings in the form of discourses or initiates worthy spiritual seekers in the path of self-control and righteousness. Only these advanced aspirants, by their own noble and firm efforts, attain Self-realization and ultimately Supreme state of Omniscience in due course of time.

Glory of Detachment

1. The aspirant whose infatuation and attachment have been considerably reduced or calmed down is an enlightened soul (Gnani). One whose infatuation and attachment are completely annihilated, is a person of absolute knowledge (Purna-Gnani) known as omniscient God (Paramatma).
2. Real peace and tranquility either in this life or in the life hereafter, will not be accomplished without annihilation of the veil of ignorance and delusion.
3. One who is not at all influenced by infatuation and attachment, one whose mind is well-established in firm detachment, and one who is completely engrossed in the pursuit of the Self, is himself the temple, the God, and the savior.
4. During the process of annihilation of infatuation, true divine bliss (Sahajanand) grows richer and richer. The aspirant who seeks this bliss of the Self, should, therefore, become adventurous enough to destroy the army of infatuation with his great efforts.
5. Countless virtues of the nature of Supreme Reality develop in the life of the great aspirant, whose infatuation is thoroughly annihilated. These virtues are contentment, humility, forgiveness, austerity, detachment, celibacy, love of seclusion, and compassion towards all living beings in the world.
6. In the first stage, one should cultivate virtues like detachment to worldly attractions, simplicity, obedience to the great saints, good thoughts, compassion and gentleness. In advanced stages of development, one should have control of the mind and senses, with inclination towards virtuous acts, evanescence of worldly pursuits, and supremacy of the divine Self above

everything else.

7. One should conquer infatuation through attainment of Self-realization. Such a one, who realizes that pure knowledge is the essence of Self (Soul), is the real monk.

Living Examples of Detachment

- (1) Pandit Ramatanu Lahiri was a great learned man in the state of Bengal, India, who lived during 19th century. His life was full of simplicity and contentment. He remained thoroughly engrossed in truthfulness and regular meditation of soul. Once in a week, on a fixed day, religious discussion and singing of devotional songs were held at his residence with other aspirants. This is known as Satsang.

His eldest son was very bright and used to win scholarships and prizes every year.

Unfortunately, he died in his early age, while he was a college student studying for a graduate degree. This was the day of Satsang for Panditji. His son's dead body was still in the room and religious people arrived for the weekly program. Just as one member was entering the room, Panditji said, "Today, Satsang will be held in another room. My son's dead body lies in this room."

The members were simply aghast but Panditji said, "It is time for our program. Let us commence the benediction."

As the program ended, the last rites of the son were performed. No one who looked at the face of Panditji could guess that his son had just died.

This is the reward of real Sadhana. The less attachments to the family, friends and worldly objects, the higher success in the spiritual life (Sadhana).

- (2) In the year 1952, a Jain monk known as Acharya Shantisagar Maharaj was in the city of Dahingaum in the state of Maharashtra, India. His leg was injured by a nail. As his wound was being dressed, despite the pain the Acharya remained calm.

He used to say, “The body, the disease, and the spirit (Soul) all perform their own functions independently.”

Discrimination was his motto in life. While the wound was being healed, he took the great vow of Sallekhana. In Jainism, Sallekhana means to end the life voluntarily by giving up all attachments and aversions along with food and water and remain in meditation until death. This is one of the ways a person attains divine-death (Samadhi Maran). During Sallekhana, revered Acharya lived for 34 days, but not even once he sighed from grief and distress ! Such great men have developed non- attachment not only towards all worldly objects, but even to their own body. We learn this from such surprising and sublime events of their lives.

(3) This happened about 125 years ago.

It was a full-moon night and near the bank of the river Ganges, a small boat was moving in the river. There was only one passenger with the boatman. The boatman was tired of work after a long day. The passenger said, “Well friend, rest for a while. We will proceed further after some time.” The boatman agreed and rested for a while.

The passenger strolled on the bank. After some time he saw something lying on the ground. He ran to the boat and said, “Move the boat on quickly !” “What are you afraid of ?” asked the boatman. “Get the boat moving ! I shall explain later,” replied the passenger. The boat moved away to some distance. The boatman said, “Now tell me what were you afraid of. What did you see ?”

The passenger explained, “As I was walking on the bank I saw a bag full of money. I observed it closely and my mind felt covetous. I therefore ran away from it and approached you. How can I, an ordinary man, subject myself to covetousness and grab anything which is not my own ? Therefore I ran away with firm determination.” The boatman simply stared at the passenger in amazement. This passenger was Dindayal whose son Shree Nag lived his whole life as a pupil of Shree Ramkrishna Paramahans, who was a great Self-realized person of that time. They lived near

Calcutta in the state of Bengal.

13

Humility

Introduction

Humility is internal and devotional respect towards all that is noble and sublime.

Actually, humility is just a natural virtue of the Soul. It is inherent in the soul with other virtues like knowledge, faith, contentment, forgiveness etc.

The question may be asked that if it is so, why is it not experienced in daily life ? The reply is that the common people of the world are not aware of their own inherent virtues. People do not pay attention to this inner and natural virtue of humility but go on constantly nourishing its

rival infatuation in the form of pride. Thus ignorance and perverse practices are the causes of non-attainment of the virtue of humility.

Cultivation And Development of Humility

Pride that annihilates humility is said to be eightfold by the great sages (Acharyas). The development of humility becomes simplified and quick success is achieved, if one knows the following eight forms of pride.

1. Pride of Knowledge :

One may acquire multifaceted and vast knowledge as a result of studying scriptures, constant discussion (satsang) with other aspirants, and the arduous practice of concentration in the presence of an enlightened preceptor. At this stage, if one prides himself on this learning and looks upon others as low and insignificant, this is known as the pride of knowledge.

2. Pride of Worship :

When several types of human and super-human virtues become manifest within oneself, when one's fame spreads all over, when one wins regard, honor and worship from emperors, wealthy people, sheriffs, great ascetics, and scholars, at this stage, if one looks upon one's self as high and great in vanity, then this is known as the pride of worship.

3. Pride of Family :

Suppose one's relatives had been honored with ministerial positions in the government, or great saints, or a Nobel prize winner and so on, at this time if one boasts of one's greatness due to this ancestral superiority, then it is known as the pride of the family.

4. Pride of Race :

Suppose one's ancestors are of a high and noble family, such as Nagar Brahmins, Sisodiya Rajputs, or from some other respectable race and in such a case, if one boasts of one's greatness due to this, then it is known as the pride of the race.

5. Pride of Power :

One might be in the full bloom of youth and endowed with unique physical power, one might have cultivated grand eloquence that pleases and makes thousands amazed, one might have a sweet resounding voice or one might be blessed with the will power by which one can stick to one's activity till one is victorious. If one becomes arrogant due to one or more of these abilities, then this is known as the pride of power.

6. Pride of Excellent Attainment :

When a person attains superhuman achievements like far-seeing, far-hearing, flying in the sky, walking on the water and so on, through self control or other means; and if one becomes proud of these, then it is called the pride of excellent attainment.

7. Pride of Austerity :

While practicing various types of penances such as fasting, reciting prayers, meditation, and abandonment of taste, if one starts feeling that he is unparalleled (Tapasvi) and experiences a sense of loftiness in his heart, it is pride of austerity.

8. Pride of Body :

When various parts of the body such as the eyes, ears, nose, chin, chest and so on are quite handsome or beautiful and well-proportioned, and the elegance of the body is eye catching; if with this beauty of the body, one becomes proud, then this is the pride of the body.

This eightfold pride obstructs the spiritual progress of the aspirant. One should therefore know fully this eightfold pride, abandon it in daily life and resort to humility. If this is accomplished appropriately, humility as a virtue will reveal itself in a short time.

Reward of The Development of Humility

All great human beings have developed the virtue of humility and have sung its eulogy. Unity, peace and prosperity grow when we show by our behavior, humility towards our parents and elders,

pious persons, teachers and professors, learned people and scholars, monks, Acharyas, and others.

Many popular sayings such as “Pride is the source of sin,” “One who bows is liked by all,” and “The pride of even king Ravan went to dust,” prove that Indian culture has looked down upon pride as a vice while humility is accepted everywhere as a great virtue.

As the aspirant progresses in his spiritual life (Sadhana), his vision widens, he looks upon all living beings as similar to his own, he loses his interest in achieving high social status or position of power, etc. With the rise of this rational and discriminating view, he agrees to the words of saints :

“It is difficult to be known as a servant, but I am a servant, even a servant of the servant ! I now cherish to be like the grass which gets trampled beneath the feet !”

Let us now see the ultimate spiritual reward of the development of humility. Only the humble can honor and worship the saints repeatedly and methodically. If one is lucky enough to associate with a true saint, and if the latter is convinced that his devotee deserves it, one will achieve Self-knowledge. When one ponders over this divine knowledge repeatedly, one is able to cultivate the power to climb up the ladder leading to true philosophical and spiritual thinking.

As a result of this, the aspirant attains Self-realization and becomes a saint. This proves that the highest philosophical and spiritual reward can be achieved by the development of this virtue called humility.

Let us grasp through the study of authentic scriptures, and through the guidance of the preceptor, the numerous types of humility :

- humility of true knowledge (Gnan-vinay),
- humility of true vision (Darsan-vinay),
- humility of true conduct (Charitra-vinay)

- humility pertaining to the greatness of Acharyas and other great people not comprehensible directly by us at present (Upchar-Vinay). Let us develop this great and fundamental virtue in its right earnestness.

Glory of Humility

1. The first test of a person's real greatness is the humility he has acquired.
2. As we further our advancement in humility, we move near the peak of greatness.
3. By humility, we can win many things, yet it costs nothing.
4. Through humility, loving conduct and a spirit of tolerance, all human beings can be conciliated and made our good friends.
5. Real greatness dawns only when boasting ends.
6. Humility is the root of loftiness; it is the source of all prosperity; it spreads our glory far and wide and is like the moon that brings the tide in the ocean of religion (Dharma).
7. It is our duty to be humble towards the highly virtuous, it is our politeness to be humble to equals and our nobility to be humble to inferiors. Humility towards one and all indicates a state of equanimity.
8. Just as trees rich in fruits hang low, monsoon clouds full of water come down towards earth as rains, similarly, noble persons develop a natural tendency for benevolence on attaining prosperity.
9. Whatever great work one may have accomplished, let one not become proud of it. If one becomes proud, all that one has done becomes undone. Pride makes all our fame and great work useless.
10. Like fragrance mixing with gold, if humility mixes with knowledge, one attains real greatness.
11. Let us neither look upon any one as low nor hate him. Let us give up the habit of comparing ourselves with others and possessing superiority complex.

Living Examples of Humility

- (1) About 80 years ago, a Jain monk named Shree Atmaramji Maharaj had come to offer his salutations to the holy place at Palitana in the state of Gujarat, India. He learnt that his elder brother, also a Jain monk named Shree Vruddhichandraji, was ill in near by city called Bhavnagar. After offering his salutations to the holy place, Atmaramji Maharaj proceeded to travel on foot to Bhavnagar together with his pupils. He was accorded a huge welcome.

Vruddhichandraji learnt of the arrival of Atmaramji to inquire about his health. He went on his own to meet him, and the two met in all warmth.

Then the following dialogue took place between the two monks :

Vruddhichandraji said to his younger brother Atmaramji, "Please give a benedictory speech to the mass."

Atmaramji replied, "How can I preach to the mass in your presence?"

Vruddhichandraji said, "What if I ask you to ?"

Atmaramji said, "Then I will obey your orders."

With these words, he gave a benedictory speech, got up from his seat and offered salutations to Vruddhichandraji.

Vruddhichandraji said, "You are the elder Acharya. You need not offer salutations to me."

Atmaramji said, "Acharya ? Whose Acharya ? I am an Acharya of the householders, but I am like a servant for you." This is the humility of a great man who is no less than an Acharya, towards his honored elder brother.

- (2) The king Chandrapid Maharaja ruled over the state of Kashmir, India. He was virtuous, religious and just.

Once the king decided to build a place of religious worship in his kingdom. His officers selected a very peaceful land for the purpose. There was a small house (hut) on the land owned by a poor family

regarded as an untouchable. The officers offered a very high price to the untouchable for his hut but he did not accept the offer. The officers sent a complaint against him to the king. The king was not pleased about the complaint. On the contrary he scolded the officers.

The king sent his special emissary to talk to the untouchable. He replied, "I would give my hut if the king himself comes and asks for it." As the emissary returned and reported, all the officers were enraged at his daring. However, the king immediately accepted the offer. The king gave up his royal glory and pride, and came to the house of the untouchable. He requested his hut and paid the full price.

The king was saintly indeed. He had the spirit of offering everything that he had for best humility, justice and religious mission.

(3) A Jain monk named Ratnaraj Maharaj was a brilliant scholar and a famous saint belonging to Sthanakvasi sect. He wrote very useful literature regarding grammar, logic, and principles of Jainism.

Once he was examining his own work "Kartavya-Kaumudi", when he was staying at Palanpur for four months of the rainy season in the year 1915 A.D.

He felt the need for an expert to go through the book and revise it, so that it might become more useful to a larger section of the society. Coincidentally, Pandit Sukhlalji, another Jain scholar, was also in Palanpur.

Pandit Sukhlalji was not a Jain monk but he was the well respected Jain scholar of the 20th century. He was born in Gujarat, India. He lost his total vision while he was 16 years old, yet he attained the highest scholarship which was publicly recognized by the government of India. He lived a long, simple, useful, and pious life. He gave many years of his services to Gujarat Vidyapith, an institution pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi. He died on March 3, 1978 in Ahmedabad, the industrial capital of the state of Gujarat.

Ratnaraj Maharaj requested Pandit Sukhlalji to review his book with him. Pandit Sukhlalji stayed in a house outside the town and

it was not possible for him to go to the monk's place (Upashray) again and again for review purpose. He therefore suggested that the work be revised at his residence.

Even though Ratnaraj Maharaj was a monk, he was very simple by heart as well as humble, and hence agreed to the suggestion. At a fixed hour daily he went to the residence of Pandit Sukhlalji and read the book chapter by chapter. He noted all his comments on the book. The review was over within a few weeks.

If Ratnaraj Maharaj had asked Pandit Sukhlalji to come to the Upashray, then other Jain followers (Sangh) could have arranged transportation for Sukhlalji to come to Upashray. However, Ratnaraj Maharaj was very humble and had no pride of his status as a monk. How could such a great soul put blind (Pragnachakshu) Pandit Sukhlalji to inconvenience ?

Adverse Feelings

The Impure Emotional States

The qualities inherent in the original and basic constitution of Soul are natural and pure (Svabhav-Bhav). When the Soul misses these natural qualities and experiences some other ones, then impure and emotional states arise. Some examples of the natural and basic qualities of soul are forgiveness, humbleness and contentment. The reverse of these, anger, pride, and greed are impure emotional states of soul (adverse feelings).

The aim of an aspirant should be to wash out these impure emotional states from the soul and to reveal its pure qualities. It would therefore be beneficial to narrate and analyze in brief the different impure states or adverse feelings that the soul is likely to experience.

Types of Impure Emotional States

The belief of Self in the non-Self is the first and major impure state responsible for infinite perpetuation of the mundane existence of births and rebirths. Other impure states cannot be eliminated from one's life, unless the Soul gives up the delusive belief of ownership of the body and its features as one's true Self.

This delusive belief is known by different names, such as ignorance (Mithyatva), illusion, falsehood and sense of extroversion. Other impure feelings are those of anger, different forms of pride, illusory behavior, greed, various types of passions, jealousy, sorrow, fear, disgust, false allegations, violence, theft, hunting, gambling etc.

Order of The Annihilation of Impure Emotional States

The science and methodology of getting rid of these feelings is subtle indeed. This whole activity is known as advancement on the path of liberation. The implementation of this path can be presented in three stages as follows :

1. In the initial stage, the enlightened preceptor preaches the aspirant somewhat like this, "Well brother, get over your various faults so long as you are hale and hearty. As you proceed to self-improvement, the biggest defect to encounter is wantonness (see chapter-11). Let it be annihilated by association with the wise, which will induce virtues in you."

Thus, by a combination of humility, obedience and similar other virtues you will be worthy of properly perceiving the spiritual sermons of the preceptor and the mystic teachings learnt through the study of authentic scriptures.

For awakening your soul and getting a proper grasp of the absolute Reality, you have to acquire true knowledge of the basic elements (Tattvas) of the universe such as Soul and Matter (Jiv and Ajiv), and practice deep contemplation on their nature.

It is said, "Controlled activities of senses, simplicity, recognition

of the instructions of saints, good thoughts, compassion and gentleness - these qualities form the prime basis for the realization of the Soul.” Let one ponder over the knowledge acquired. Let us serve the enlightened preceptors - this is the resolve of the learned.

2. Thus it can easily be understood that by continuous study of the true nature of the Self, the spiritual aspirant firmly believes that only his true Self is his own, and none others. He does not accept body, anger, lust, and so on as constituting the original nature of Soul. These impure emotional states arise due to lack of awareness of the Soul in a state of Karmic bondage. Such an aspirant has realized that these feelings of anger and so on are the defiled states of the soul and hence are impure and sorrowful. As they are the cause of further bondage, he has resolved to remove them all.
3. Such a wise aspirant knows one thing for certain, that these impure states of anger and so on arise or get inflated only if he entangles his mind in worldly affairs losing sight of his mission. Now, if the aspirant develops indifference and conceives these impure states as worthy of renunciation, he will naturally minimize all those different activities which give rise to or excite these adverse feelings so that, in due course, the force of these impurities will lessen.

In addition to reducing these activities, he enriches his will power by practicing and participating in activities such as the company of the wise, scriptural studies, devotion to God, observance of silence (Maun), seclusion, pondering over Reality, etc.

Just as the aspirant advances in his spiritual life (Sadhana) of reflection and meditation by enhancing his vows, he will progress towards spiritual enlightenment. One day, during meditation, he attains that divine and enlightening experience called Self-realization, which pervades all aspects of his life, and produces a total change in his personality.

Now, he is transformed from an aspirant into a saint, and is firmly established on the path of supreme Godhood. In the end he attains the state of pure knowledge and infinite bliss, through equanimity (Sthitpragna) and meditation without conscious thoughts (Nirvikalp Samadhi). He thus conquers all peaks of spiritual development and becomes a perfect soul.

We have thus analyzed from the spiritual point of view the progress and order in which impure states of the individual soul can be purified. In modern days, we can concede that the development of the spiritual path is more difficult. This is because the purity of the previous births is limited, association with the enlightened souls is difficult to obtain and a common person is surrounded by antagonistic evil events in life. Also an aspirant fails to loosen his attachment to the flimsy worldly pleasures of mundane life.

In other words, the strength of determination has to be further reinforced constantly to overcome the varied sensual temptations and their effects on day-to-day life. For this, again, great tolerance, patience, courage and sincere following of the right path are necessary.

In the modern atomic age, the battle of the aspirant against adverse feelings and experiences is long drawn, tough, full of calamities and spread over both the imminent and transcendental forms of Sadhana. Still, however, with firm determination and by frequent or constant association with the wise, victory is easy, simple and natural; because the attainment is aimed at one's own pure state, which is the rightful, inborn and eventual destination of every wise person.

Living Examples of Victory Over Adverse Feelings

(1) This is an incident at the time of Bhagvan Mahavir.

There was once discussion among monks (Shramans). The topic of discussion was : "Who drowns deepest in the ocean of life : a person of lust, anger, greed, delusion, or pride ?" The monks discussed their different views, but there was no agreement. All

jointly approached Bhagvan Mahavir and sought a reply.

There was a counter question from Bhagvan Mahavir, "If we throw in the water a fine, dry boat, will it sink?"

Monks replied, "No Sir ! It will not."

Bhagvan : "Now, if there is a hole in the boat?"

Monks : "Surely Sir, it will sink then."

Bhagvan : "At what place should the hole be, so that the boat will sink?"

Monks : "Holy Sir, it will sink with a hole anywhere in its basement."

Bhagvan : "Similar is the reality of Soul, O Shramanas ! any where in the Soul - be it lust, anger, greed, delusion or pride, these lead to bondage of Karma and the Soul bound by Karma is sure to be drowned in the ocean of life. Therefore, let the aspirant ever try to be free from these adverse feelings, that are blemishes. Let him thus propitiate God by true faith, true knowledge, and true conduct and progress on the path of liberation."

(2) There was a sudden shout in the peaceful atmosphere of the Gurukul (residential college). Someone shouted, "A scorpion has bitten Guruji (religion teacher) !"

All students ran to find out as to what had happened and how. Some students were rubbing gently to Guruji, one student captured the scorpion under a stick. Guruji told all pupils, "I am fine. Go back and get back to your work again."

However, one student tied the scorpion with a string and hung it on the wall. The scorpion was released after three hours following a pressing appeal from Guruji. Still, the anger of that student towards the scorpion had not disappeared.

After a few months, on the festival day known as Guru-Poornima, there were preparations for the festival. At that time, Guruji declared, "This year, I shall seek an individual gift from every student." All

students were delighted at this declaration. They were willing to give anything that will please Guruji.

At the end of the festival, it was the time for Guruji to demand some gift from the students (Guru-Dakshina). However, Guruji demanded a type of the gift which was totally unexpected. Guruji asked every student to remove the major faults from their life, for example greed, anger, etc.

Ultimately, there came the turn of a student who had punished the scorpion. Guruji told him, “You have to take a vow not to get angry. This will be the gift (Guru Dakshina) from you to me.”

This noble Guruji was Shree Nrusinh Acharya, a scholar and Yogi who specialized in the field of meditation. He lived near Baroda, Gujarat in the middle of the 19th century.

(3) Queen Catharine of Italy was known for her angry and capricious temperament.

Once it so happened that she was passing through a military camp, when she heard some commotion among the soldiers. She got down from her carriage and proceeded towards the soldiers with a few body-guards. In a trench, soldiers were talking about the difficulties that they faced and particularly they were blaming Queen Catherine.

The body-guards and the Queen heard all this. The Queen got angry at first, but in no time, she got over her anger and told the body-guards, “What the soldiers state is correct. I have gone on committing violence and hatred for a long time. I shall try to get over all my blemishes that my soldiers and people are critical of. I declare that I shall do my best to provide happiness and benefits to all my soldiers and people.”

Thus she announced the change in her temperament and summoned the soldiers. The soldiers approached trembling with fright. The Queen consoled and reassured them. She passed on instructions to the commanders to do everything for their comfort

and happiness.

A feeling of joy and admiration spread over all her subjects.

15

Contentment

Background

Contentment is a state in which even when subjected to various longings and temptations in day-to-day life, one remains unruffled and satisfied. As explained earlier in chapter 1 (Forgiveness), let it be clearly understood, that contentment is the very basic nature of Soul. Therefore permitting greed to arise or becoming greedy is unnatural in spiritual vision, as it gives birth to viciousness and sorrows.

Spiritual Practice of Contentment And Its Reward

One who resorts to spiritual practice (Sadhana)

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and has understood the nature of the Soul and the doctrine of Karma by philosophical vision, is very fortunate indeed. Such a person has the necessary capability to uphold the great virtue of contentment. Wealth, power, relations and fame cannot be attained just by hankering after them. These things can be acquired easily if one deserves them and is lucky to have the benefit of previously acquired merit (Punya). It is only when such true conviction and faith arise, that contentment reveals itself by stages in the life of an aspirant.

When contentment is achieved a person experiences mental peace, ease in life, and a state free from worries and tension. He is not inclined to be attracted by large-scale undertakings. Thus, by stages, he experiences introversion and steadiness, and attains the highest transcendental meditation (Nirvikalp-Samadhi). He also associates with divine bliss through the control of the mind. Attainment of this state is the climax of a successful spiritual life. This is precisely the true meditation of the Yogis, the unflinching devotion of devotees and Self-knowledge of enlightened souls.

Desirelessness is achieved in proportion to contentment; accomplished with the dawning of non-attachment. A spiritual practice in loneliness results in quick success of spiritual progress. A higher state is also attained in the life hereafter because of the collection of unique virtues through quietude of passions in general and covetousness in particular.

Ways To Conquer Covetousness (Greed, Desire)

The process narrated in the first chapter (Forgiveness) applies here also. In that chapter we described the stages of annihilation of anger and the process thereof; here, in a similar manner, we have to understand that the effort of annihilation of covetousness becomes successful by resorting to the virtue under discussion (contentment).

However, conquering covetousness is more difficult than conquering anger. Covetousness is so cunning that it is not externally manifested while anger is detected by several external signs; and

hence, its detection becomes simple. Covetousness is, again, shown to be the last of all passions to be separated from soul, as described in the Jain scriptures. This is due to the utter difficulty of conquering its subtle types. The condemnation of covetousness and the greatness of contentment are known to the world by famous sayings such as, “Greed is the father of sin,” “The pit of desires is limitless and endless,” “Desire is the root cause of sorrow,” etc. A person blinded by covetousness resorts not only to deceit, treachery and injustice, but may go to the extent even of killing the other person. A person subjected to covetousness resorts to such condemnable acts as described above and therefore the aspirant should continue in his efforts to strike constantly at the gross and subtle forms of covetousness and resort to the virtue of supreme contentment for his further advancement.

Glory of Contentment

1. Discontent is great sorrow and contentment is great happiness. Let the aspirants have such firm conviction and let them try constantly to feel contented.
2. Wealth in the form of cash, land, houses, cars, and jewels is known to the world, but few in the world know that contentment is the wealth before which all other forms of wealth are just trifles.
3. Contentment is natural wealth, while voluptuousness is unnatural.
4. True calmness is the highest austerity (Tap). Contentment is the highest happiness. Desires are the worst diseases. Compassion is the noblest religion.
5. A person free from attachment is free from worries, one free from worries is free from anxiety. The person who is not attached to any object is an uncrowned king of the world.
6. Giving up attachment to wealth and such like, is difficult. Persons endowed with a sense of discrimination are also sometimes enslaved by covetousness. One should therefore,

constantly study and put into practice, the causes that reduce covetousness.

7. The emperors (Chakravarti) of the earth and the king of heaven (Indra) also have great desires and attachments. They become acquisitive. However, only great sages on the earth who have abandoned desires completely by resorting to true contentment, really experience increasing divine and supersensuous bliss. Such great souls command respect and veneration from all.
8. O Soul ! What do you desire now ? Desire is the root of sorrow. The eternal misery is dissipated only when the desire is destroyed.
9. A saint (Yogi) is supreme being in the world for the time when he is desireless. The moment he desires something worldly, the world is superior to him and he becomes a servant.
10. As one gives up desires through right knowledge, his mind slowly and surely gives up unsteadiness. As unsteadiness is given up, the mind and the senses are conquered, the hesitations disappear from the mind. This leads the aspirant to experience the delight of supreme transcendental meditation (Samadhi).
11. A person is happy permanently in contentment. He is ever merged in the nectar of self-meditation. Senses and their objects seem to be a source of unhappiness to him.
12. It is necessary that a person gives up all worldly desires so that he can attain absolute Truth. If desires are not restrained, they go on expanding and make it difficult to liberate from worldly life. This is because the depth of desires and attachments is endless and can never be fulfilled. Self-controlled, heroic, and discriminating persons therefore conquer desires and passions through contentment and lead their lives for the ultimate freedom of themselves and others. Let us praise these heroes ! Blessed are these great saints !

Living Examples of Contentment

- (1) A great Sanskrit scholar named Kaiyata, was the writer of the religious scripture “Maha-Bhashya-Tilak”. He was from the tradition of the Brahmin pandits of Kashmir. He led the life of a sage (Rishi). His cottage had one mat on the floor to seat, a water-pot, a few clothes, utensils, and religious books (Shastra).

He was always busy with his religious works for many hours in a day. His wife used to weave ropes and earned some money for food. They were very poor, yet he and his wife did not accept any charity from any source.

The king of Kashmir learnt of the poor life of this great scholar Kaiyata. He personally came to his cottage and said humbly with folded hands, “Sir, I am ashamed that the learned scholar (pandit) like you, is poor in my kingdom.”

Kaiyata immediately folded his mat, took water-pot and told his wife, “Let us not stay here. The king feels ashamed of us !”

The king bowed down at his feet with folded hands, “Kindly pardon my mistake if any. Kindly give me an opportunity to serve you!”.

Kaiyata replied, “If you are serious about serving me, please see that you or your officers do not come here. Please do not send gifts, money or food. My only desire is to live in seclusion, study the scriptures, write, and remain engrossed in the Self-meditation. I desire nothing else.”

This is the desirelessness of a true devotee of the goddess of learning (Saraswati). Such contentment is difficult to be found in modern days in scholars or even in saints and monks.

- (2) Swami Dayanand Saraswati is in the first rank of the great men of the 19th century in India. He had established the new Hindu religion sect called Arya-Samaj. He was a great devotee and servant of Indian culture. He was a celibate throughout

his life.

In the initial days of his spiritual practice (Sadhana), he followed a strict vow with himself and used to wear only one loin cloth on his body. Once a gentleman came and said, "Swamiji, since you have only one loin cloth, I have brought another."

Swamiji replied, "Well friend, even this one loin cloth is a burden to me. Why do you load me with an extra burden ? I thank you for your regard, but I cannot accept another loin cloth. Please take it back."

This was the desirelessness and spirit of contentment of the great monk (Yogi).

(3) Sheikh Sadi was a great religious preacher of Muslim religion in Iran. He was very poor. Once he had no shoes to wear and no money to buy. Without shoes, while walking, his feet used to burn and pebbles bruised his feet. He experienced much discomfort.

During this time he went for prayers to the mosque at Kufa. He saw at the entrance, a man with both his legs amputated. When Sheikh Sadi pondered over that man's helplessness, his eyes opened. He thanked God, "O God, how kind of you ! You have kept my two legs safe !"

If we look to the sorrows of others in the world, our own sorrows lessen. We then remain contented with the state that Providence has placed us in.

16

Company of Nobles

In general, company of nobles (Satsamagam) means association with the noble persons, religious scriptures and like. The purpose of such association is to improve ourselves, to make good of our present life and to attain eternal happiness through Self-realization. Association with persons of like nature with pious intention, hearing of the sermons of saints who inspire righteousness and liberation, are other forms of Satsamagam.

Satsamagam at its best is, living constantly at the feet of the enlightened saints and striving for

SATSAMAGAM

spiritual advancement.

In the first stage, the Aspirant will spare an hour or two, for two days in a week, for the spiritual practice of Satsamagam. For those who have greater ardor for spiritual advancement, daily association with saintly persons is necessary.

A common person can benefit greatly in the daily routine of his life, if he pursues the following method of Satsamagam.

At well planned periodical intervals, one should resort to intensive Satsamagam. For this purpose, one should stay in some secluded place (Ashram) and remain in obedience to an enlightened noble preceptor. Various schedules of spiritual practice which lead to Self-realization are available in such places from early morning to late night. One has to take part in these various Sadhana-schedules according to one's capacity and aptitude.

With an alert mind, one should actively participate in : reflection about the nature of substances, practice of silence, devotion to the Lord, sessions of meditation, sessions of questions and answers, praising and reciting the glory of Lord, reading, writing, memorising, and listening to scriptures. By these various means, one progresses on the path of Sadhana.

Process of Satsamagam

1. Let one decide once for all that "I desire to progress on the path of Self-realization."
2. One should proceed to Satsamagam, leaving behind the pride of knowledge, wealth, power, austerity, renunciation and the rest.
3. Taking simple and proper food, observing the rule of not to involve in unnecessary talks, and remaining contented in whatever facilities are available should be followed.
4. Let there be friendly and compromising attitude towards all. Let behavior towards the saints and virtuous be noble and devotional. Let there be an abandonment of futile criticism, jealousy, controversial debates - all these practices are beneficial

in Satsamagam.

5. The type of discipline that is essential involves limited sleep and food, purposeful conversation with others, regular presence at religious discourses and study-sessions, taking notes during self-study and giving these to the more learned for correction, and joining in mass-prayers and devotional songs.
6. Individually, passing a specific time in worship, silent scriptural study, reciting and memorizing the songs of detachment, study of Reality, in a secluded and peaceful place are all necessary and beneficial to advanced aspirant.

Glory of Company of Nobles

Satsamagam reigns supreme among all the means of spiritual disciplines. Undoubtedly it has got the capacity to bestow not only the ordinary happiness, but even the highest spiritual state. No one has words enough to extol its full glory. Still we humbly follow the highly enlightened ones in describing briefly its immense glory in a few words:

1. Obedient association with noble people even for a short while will help to cross over the ocean of mundane existence.
2. It is the root of all happiness. The resulting benefit of Satsang can certainly bestow the desired attainment. It is the best means to lead pious life.
3. We should have a strong conviction that Satsamagam as the means is par excellence for attaining liberation and all other means are subordinate to this. If one follows it with unflinching care and devotion, in no time, attachments are destroyed and the soul becomes free from all bondages.
4. Satsamagam quenches the thirst of the mind, and brings an end to pride. It takes away sorrow and enhances spiritual wealth.

Living Examples of Company of Nobles

- (1) Shri Lalluji was a Jain monk and a disciple of Shrimad

Rajchandra. He spent four months of the rainy season in Poona at the residence of Shri Manekji Vardhaman. At that time, many aspirants used to visit him. Among them was Shri Amarchand Nahata, a householder disciple of Shri Lalluji Swami. He was a landlord from Bengal who moved to Agas Ashram for spiritual guidance.

Shri Hiralal Jhaveri, a friend of Shri Nahata visited him. He was a jeweller in Paris. As it was time for the devotion (Bhakti) and Satsamagam Shri Nahata told Shri Hiralal, "I am going for Satsamagam. Please wait here for a while."

Shri Hiralal commented, "Why such devotion and Satsamagam ? Only the poor people do devotion and Satsamagam."

Shri Nahata, "No, no ! This is a unique Satsamagam ! Come with me and you will be delighted."

Shri Hiralal, "I can go with you on one condition. I do not bow before monks and saints."

Shri Nahata, "Separate seating arrangements will be possible for you so that you do not have to bow before monks. Please come with me, you will be happy."

Shri Hiralal agreed to come. The program of mass prayer, spiritual songs and Mantras lasted for three hours. All were fully engrossed. Shri Hiralal was deeply influenced by the pious composure of Shri Lalluji Swami, his engrossment in devotion and enthusiasm. He too fell at his feet in utter devotion. This is the reward of Satsamagam.

(2) Shri Haridas was a deciple of a Hindu monk Shri Chaitanya of the 15th century in the state of Bihar, India. Shri Chaitanya was a great devotee of Lord Shri Krishna and became a national figure by his intense devotion and pure life.

Shri Haridas used to go in a jungle at night for greater spiritual practice (Sadhana). A man named Ramkhan, sent a prostitute to his hut to divert his mind from devotion. All the while, Haridas went on with his singing of devotional songs and the woman waited in

vain to disturb his concentration. However the devotion continued for the whole night. Two days passed in this way.

On the third day, the woman lost all courage and fell at his feet. The life of that woman was changed by three nights of devotion. Her best virtues revealed themselves and she became a nun. She got a place among the best Satsangis of Chaitanya. Now people gathered to see her as a pious nun because she was no more a fallen woman. Thus she had become pious by Satsamagam.

(3) Shri Gnaneshvar Maharaj was a great saint of Maharashtra. From childhood, he was very intelligent. This may be due to influence of previous lives. He was a man of constant study and had acquired much religious knowledge. Yet he had not tasted the essence of Godliness. His devotion to God was not at its peak.

Once he came in contact with Shri Namdev, who was a great devotee. He stayed in his company for a few days and then asked, "Namdevji ! I should like to accompany you on pilgrimage."

Shri Namdev replied, "Let me take the permission from God." He went to the temple. Gnaneshvar went behind him. Shri Namdev was singing and praising God with a deep concentration. Tears were flowing from his eyes. However Gnaneshvar could not concentrate in the prayer and singing. After this, Gnaneshvar went on pilgrimage with Namdev. He got direct lessons of devotion to God from him and then he tasted the sweetness of devotion to God. Thus he became the true devotee of God by Satsamagam.

17 Awareness of The Self

Background

Awareness of the Self (Atma-Jagruti) means complete absence of idleness, i.e. absolute alertness. This virtue is also known as Yatna, Savdhani, or Apramattva. The aim and conviction of purity of the Self during the spiritual practice as also at other times, is awareness of the Self. In perfect awareness, there is intense carefulness about the work that has been undertaken.

ATMA-JAGRUTI

General Nature of Awareness

The nature of awareness can be clarified by one example. If we are attentive to the contents of a lecture that we are hearing, it is full awareness. If one's memory is not sharp, one may fail to remember what is heard, but even in such cases, the general purport would definitely be grasped. If we are not awake and alert, we would neither know what has been said, nor grasp its essence. What is true of a lecture is also true of scriptural study, devotion, satsang, contemplation and singing devotional songs (Kirtan).

Let us now consider another type of alertness, useful to the aspirant. In this type, one must be alert even at times other than those of spiritual practice. For example, one should be alert not to hurt any insects or other small beings under the feet while walking. We should keep the same care and alertness in bathing, using water, sweeping, lighting a fire, arranging things, and so on. If we are careful, alertness becomes a habit and a high state of spiritual discipline will reveal itself in us, because we live a life where alertness becomes our second nature.

Supreme Spiritual Awareness

Now look at the life of the most successful aspirant and examine what awareness is; how, when and to what extent it is manifested, what reward it yields in life, etc.

When the aspirant achieves the status of a saint, through Self-Realization, his whole personality gets surcharged with a unique divinity. The reason is that he has cut off the knots of infatuation (Moh) and as a result, constant awareness has become a part of all his activities. Just as a retired person, not earning at present continues to earn interest on his money earned earlier, the saint with Self-knowledge also experiences a peculiar awareness due to the elimination of false knowledge (Avidya).

When the knots of attachments are cut off by the saint the inner strength of his soul explodes. As a result, he is capable of great spiritual accomplishments. He becomes fearless, takes no notice

of external disturbances and makes great strides in the path of spirituality. However, outwardly, some saints take time in revealing their real personality, and there, even in the absence of external renunciation (Tyag) the awareness is unique.

Complete Awareness

The state of complete awareness is the state of a true monk. In this state, perfect vows of nonviolence, nonstealing, truth, celibacy, and nonpossession are observed all the time, but in addition one becomes free from all dependence on worldly objects. He becomes free from all worries and engages himself in the constant effort of attaining Samadhi (to be one with God or the Self) through knowledge and meditation.

Because of equanimity he has the conviction that “the whole world is filled with divinity”. The result is that he would not accept the restriction of any particular place for his spiritual progress. In the next stage, all attachments are abandoned even from his body. Monks practice advanced equanimity and awakened godliness by the constant and condensed practice of awareness, so that the life is filled with delight and divine bliss. The atmosphere around then becomes surcharged with peace, coolness and piety. In the language of scriptures, this state of the true monk is known as “Abhikshna Gyan Upayog,” “Apramatta Samyam”, “the state of natural Samadhi,” and “the state of steadfast intellect.”

Glory of Awareness

1. Awake, O Traveller ! It is morning, the night is gone, why do you sleep now ? The one who sleeps is a loser; the one who is awake, attains the Truth.
2. O ! you unfortunate person ! you are in pain from several births! Awake, O Awake ! Be you colored by the spirit of uplift of the soul, let illusions leave the mind. O person ! attain by effort the spirit of devotion to God and a spirit of service to your revered preceptor. Discard worldly fears and the conventions of the family and this will free you from

bondage.

3. “The souls that are asleep in the slumber of illusion are ordinary people of the world, while a monk remains awake by ceaseless pondering on the Soul. Only the inattentive has fear; there is no fear for the alert and the attentive.” These are the noble words of the Jina. Liberation is not far from that person who, having attained appropriate circumstances, experiences even momentary internal awareness.
4. Wealth, adventure, character, fortune, self-control, self-restraint, and the company of learned ones all these come to the aspirant who is ever awake.
5. Constant vigilance and awareness of the soul are necessary for keeping up appropriately the vows undertaken. The same is also required to nourish the feeling of detachment and the state of divine contemplation.
6. The mother looks after the growth and health of the child with full tender care and alertness. We look after our luggage during travelling with equal care. The soldiers on duty on the border protect the territory of their country with all alertness. As aspirants, if we will look after the various facets of internal and external spirituality with such care and alertness, we will definitely attain the higher state of awareness of the soul, and with that, the true and ultimate reward of liberation.

Living Examples of Awareness

- (1) The sermon of Lord Buddha was in progress. The devoted listeners were bathing in the river of knowledge, flowing from the deep experience of life and powerful effulgence of knowledge. The religious assembly was full with the presence of monarchs, kings, emperors, wealthy, learned, pandits and the common masses.

Suddenly Lord Buddha became silent. The curiosity of the audience was enhanced because the topic of discourse was incomplete. When all looked at his face and the firm expression on

it, no one had the courage to inquire of Lord Buddha why he had stopped his sermon. The assembly slowly dispersed.

Next day, his disciples folded their hands and submitted, "Lord, nobody has understood the reason for the discontinuance of your sermon yesterday. Kindly let us know what it was."

Lord Buddha replied, "O Monks ! Your initiation commits you to receive the sermon with utmost attention so that you attain the bliss of the soul. The legs and fingers of two or three monks were moving constantly during the sermon. This showed that they were inattentive. For this reason I stopped the sermon."

If monks do not receive the sermon with utmost attention and alertness, what of the common people ? All were struck by this subtle and awakened vision of Lord Buddha. The monks resolved to resort to their spiritual discipline with greater awareness of the soul.

(2) Socrates, the famed philosopher of Greece, was a great man of unique intellectual status. He used to say, "Right from childhood, my constant companion is my true Self. My soul invariably advises me on what work I should undertake and to what time. He also warns me in advance, about improper activities that I might be undertaking."

One day the pupils asked, "Where is this Self or Soul ?" Immediately he replied, "It is the voice of my inner soul, which is known as discrimination (Vivek) or the power of intellect (Pragnashakti) in the scriptures. Those aspirants who progress on the path of spiritual practice with this best companion, are saved from all calamities and are led to the attainment of the desired goal."

(3) Some 50 years ago, in the early years of Banaras Hindu University. (established by Pandit Malaviyaji), the position of vice-chancellor was held by Acharya Narendradev. The position carried the free use of a house, a car and a servant.

Once he was going by rickshaw (small taxi) to meet some one. A close friend of his happened to see him. The friend stopped the

rickshaw and asked, “Why do you go by this rickshaw ? What happened to your car ?”

Narendradev replied, “Well friend ! How can I use the car when I go for my personal work ? In rare cases, when I am compelled to use the car for personal use, I pay for the gasoline.” With these words, Narendradev left, leaving his friend full of admiration.

Compassion

A feeling of self-affliction (suffering) produced in our heart, on seeing the various types of miseries and calamities suffered by other creatures of the universe is known as compassion.

In this world, we see that some people suffer from physical ailments, some feel pangs of separation from friends and family and some are afflicted by other adverse circumstances. On seeing these various creatures suffering from sorrows as a result of their previous false actions (Karmas), the hearts of noble persons are moved with compassion towards them and they try to dissipate their sorrows by physical, mental, financial and verbal means.

They try to be helpful to these afflicted souls in overcoming their sorrows. They give food to relieve their sufferings from hunger, give financial

aid for their basic necessities, heal their sorrows by soft, calming and sweet words and assist them to be free from physical ailments by distributing the required medical aids and arranging the necessary nursing care.

It is the very nature of worthy persons constantly to make efforts to remove the sorrows of human beings, animals and insects, being inspired by their inner compassion. Whereas dissipating the sorrows of the great and the noble is indeed the highest noble task, even helping ordinary living beings to get rid of their suffering is beneficial.

One can help the poor, the helpless and the afflicted ones, when for example, they are trapped in fire, drowning, suffering from starvation or are caught in some other form of acute distress. The greatest unique form of compassion reveals itself when one is prepared to help all living beings irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sect, or any other distinction. This compassion is very helpful to an aspirant in his spiritual advancement. This is the common form of compassion as known to the world.

Nature of Supreme Spiritual Compassion

Supreme spiritual compassion reveals itself only in enlightened saints and true monks. Average worldly people do not have Self-knowledge and hence they indulge in various actions leading to bondage. Being subjected to the fruition of these actions, they, through sheer helplessness, suffer from mental, physical and spiritual ailments, birth, old-age and death, diseases, insults and cruelty.

With an utterly compassionate heart, the enlightened saints show these distressed people of the world the path of Self-realisation and self-restraint, so that they are permanently freed from these sufferings. The world rightly recognizes them by noble titles such as emancipators of the world (Jagat-Uddharak), elevators of the low (Adham-Uddharak), saviors of the drowning (Taranhar).

Similarly, these enlightened souls exert heroic effort of saving their own self from sorrows such as birth, disease, old age and death. They also lead their lives in such a way that ignorance, attachment, jealousy and other feelings do not arise in life. This creation of an

absence of attachment, jealousy and ignorance in one's own self is known as compassion towards one's own Soul (self-compassion).

Glory of Compassion

1. The basis for the spiritual development of the self goes on evolving along with the rise of greater and greater compassion in life.
2. The spirit of compassion is an important component of uniform well-balanced social development (Sarvodaya). Two main ideas are implied in it. The first is the feeling of becoming helpful to one and all in every possible way. Once a person adopts this way of life, the feeling of individual ownership of things is minimized. Secondly the feeling of voluntary sharing of the necessities of life develops. This will bring an end to the disparity caused by the shortages of necessities of life and naturally lead to the shaping of a Sarvodaya social structure.
3. The heart of an aspirant feels severe pain at the sorrows of other beings in proportion to his real progress on the path of spiritual development. This doctrine is very true that the feeling of compassion is enhanced in life with the real progress in meditation (Bodhi-Samadhi) of the aspirant. We have several incidences of this doctrine exemplified in the lives of saints and Acharyas, who have sacrificed the most valued things of their life, to remove the sorrows and pains of the smallest beings.

Living Example of Compassion

- (1) This is an incident from the life of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Once he was going to the city of Dadupur from Banaras on foot. It was a rainy day and water had poured all around. One bullock-cart, fully loaded with grass had stuck in the mud. People all around were giving instructions to the driver of the cart but the cart was going deeper and deeper in the mud. The bulls were panting and saliva was dropping from their mouths. The heart of the Swami melted at the suffering of the bulls.

He took hold of the cart, freed the bulls and with his strength, he brought the cart out of the mud. The driver and people all round, thanked the Swami. The Swami proceeded on his path to Dadupur.

Path of Devotion

Background

The general aim of any aspirant would be to raise his Self (Soul) up to the status of Self-realization, through self improvement. There are three paths mainly laid down to attain this aim. These are the paths of : (1) Knowledge (Gnan), (2) Devotion (Bhakti), and (3) Practice of Yog.

Looking from the absolute point of view, all three paths are just one. Yet the great saints have defined the different paths of spiritual progress because the aspirants have variegated personalities. This unique personality may be due to the individual's circumstances, family background,

varied psychic effects of previous lives, present education, etc.

General Nature of Devotion

Devotion or Bhakti may be defined as the experience of admiration, respect and eulogy that arises in our mind towards personalities more virtuous than us on recognizing their human and super-human virtues. In view of one's attraction toward the virtues of the virtuous, one must come to honor and welcome them, be humble and respectful towards them, serve and worship them and admire their glory and virtues. This would, in due course, lead to purification of one's own feelings. This is the basis of the methodology to be followed in the true development of the path of devotion.

The devotion found in common people is not the true devotion of the sage. Common people resort only to conventional external modes of worship of their family priest and family God. This is only a family custom or conventional conduct. Development of real devotion is not possible where the aspirant does not know the real nature of the trio : the devotee, devotion, and God. An enlightened aspirant should therefore resort to devotion born out of appropriate and true conviction.

Specialized Nature of Devotion

One who intends to resort to Bhakti (devotion) is a Bhakta - the devotee or aspirant or Soul itself. Such a devotee should get himself thoroughly acquainted with the virtues of the preceptor-saint and of God the Supreme, towards whom he is devoted.

An aspirant should experience and express devotion towards a preceptor or Guru who is calm, composed, detached, benevolent in nature, endowed with purity of knowledge and good character. In a similar manner, towards God the Supreme, who is detached, and whose virtues of infinite knowledge and infinite bliss are fully manifested. Our own faults and weaknesses are calmed down by devotion to God the Supreme, and the enlightened preceptor. Our entire being gets filled with peace and purity on such occasions.

Now, the devotee, who is thoroughly acquainted with the virtues

of God and preceptor, practices to adopt their virtues slowly and steadily in his day-to-day life, and thereby inspires himself in the path of self-betterment and Self-realization.

Thus real devotion (Bhakti) is a scientific process of manifestation of virtues in one's life, having been delighted by their manifestation in God and preceptor. Let us now see the different types of devotion in which the devotee engages himself and thus develops the path of Bhakti.

Different Types of Devotion

Spiritual seers and poets have described nine types of Bhakti as under :

1. Attentive hearing of devotional songs and sermons (Sharvan)
2. Singing of devotional songs (Kirtan)
3. Thinking of God, Guru, Religion and Self or Soul (Chintvan)
4. Salutation to God, Guru and Religion (Vandan)
5. Service to God, Guru and Religion (Sevan)
6. Meditation (Dhyan)
7. Humility (Laghuta)
8. Equanimity (Samta)
9. Unity (Ekta)

The above mentioned nine types of devotion are well known, and the devotee attains these by truly practicing the meaning indicated by the names above. Here, it would be enough to state that as the devotee develops the right (Satvik) quality within and develops it truly, the inferior (Tamsik) and worldly (Rajsik) inclinations dwindle in his life; and Divine love manifests itself in his entire personality.

He sees and observes the Godhood in all living beings. He often experiences the outward ecstasy with tears of joy. He dances in devotion, mindless towards his own physical body. This ultimately leads to the oneness of devotee, devotion and God. It also further

leads to the higher devotion known as Para-Bhakti and to the highest unequalled devotion known as Ananya-Bhakti.

For such continuous spiritual progress, steady, systematic, well-implemented and uninterrupted devotional practice, intense love for God, non-attachment to worldly objects, and frequent association with the saints are essential and should be regularly pursued by the devotee. This fact is observed when we review and study the lives of great devotees.

Reward of Genuine Devotion

One who succeeds in the real path of devotion, attains the super-human state. He loses all attraction to the things of this world and the other worlds. He remains satisfied with his constant devotion to God. No matter what circumstances befall, he considers all of them to be alright and remains equanimous.

As he attains the higher states of devotion in this manner, his love for God and the spiritual progress thereof, flow unceasingly like the water of river Ganges. Such an enlightened and equanimous devotee remains in a blissful state, continues his mission of being helpful to one and all, inspiring others to follow the same path and to taste the divine bliss thereof.

Glory of The Path of Devotion

1. Advance yourself in the devotion of God the Supreme. The wise have praised the pondering on the virtues of God the Supreme with a pure heart, hearing sermons on God, singing His praise and His worship. The devotee should therefore try to adopt all these practices in his life.
2. In this universe, true devotion, an enlightened preceptor, association with the saints and the noble, study of authentic scriptures, equanimity of vision and true practice of Yog; all these together have never been attained by us so far, otherwise our present state would not have befallen us. However, let us accept respectfully the proverb, "Better be late than never," and work diligently. This will bring us triumphant victory and we

- will succeed after all the previous failures of countless births.
3. True devotion is not possible by an individual who is lustful, short-tempered or covetous. Only a heroic person, who does not fear the world can possibly be in tune with God the Supreme.
 4. The devotee who is pious, alert, impartial, free from worries and one who has renounced all mundane desires, is the lone favorite of God.
 5. After careful and wide-ranging thoughts, we strongly believe that devotion is the best path for spiritual uplift. If the devotion is laid at the feet of great enlightened saints it can lead to liberation.
 6. Devotion is a desire-yielding tree (Kalpataru), a desire-fulfilling cow (Kama-Dhenu) that yields the desired reward. The poet Pritam says that one who resorts to this path, experiences no pain and sorrow whatsoever.
 7. Service to other living beings, prayer to God, and meditation are all only superfluous if divine love is not blended with them. The poet says that knowledge without devotion has no significance in spiritual life. He further adds that just as the lover is with his beloved, miser is with his wealth, so a real devotee is with God by remembering His name all the time.
 8. Complete affection to God leads one to heroism, the soul ascends progressively to its true state of pure bliss by pondering over its pure virtues. Just as the mirror in hand makes one conscious of one's face, the contemplation and meditation on God or Siddha or Jineshvar makes one conscious of one's true original form (pure Soul).

Living Examples of (Success In) The Path of Devotion

- (1) Saint Tukaram (who lived in the state of Maharashtra, India in the 17th century) was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. He was endowed with the spirit of devotion right from childhood.

He gave the name “Vitthal” to Lord Krishna. Every day, his devotion led him on the path of progress towards the Divine. He was famous for his devotional songs which flowed automatically during his intense devotional chanting. These devotional songs became popular and recognized as “Abhanga”.

When he eulogized God in devotional songs, he got completely engrossed and lost in devotion; and great words of preaching came from the innermost depth of his heart. Rameshvar Bhatt, a renowned scholar of the Vedas and a famous sage heard of Saint Tukaram and his devotional songs, Abhanga. He called him and told him not to compose Abhanga, because they did not truly convey the message of Vedas. He also asked him to throw away the Abhangas, that he had composed, in the Indrani river.

Since Rameshvar Bhatt was a scholar and a famous sage, Tukaram followed his instruction but his life turned miserable without his devotional songs to God. He decided to sit in a temple with determination to see God personally or bring an end to his life. Seated on a firm seat in the temple, he became merged in devotion to God. Thirteen days and nights passed without food and sleep. Finally God appeared and he had “Darshan” of God in the temple of his heart. This led him to experience supreme peace and delight.

(2) Jagannathpuri is one of the four holy pilgrimages of Hindus. It is situated in Orrisa, about 500 kilometers from Calcutta. Every 12 years a great religious ceremony is performed and millions of devotees gather to celebrate the function. The chief idol is of Lord Jagannath, one form of Lord Krishna.

It was the second day of the Hindu month Ashadh. The procession of Lord Jagannath was in progress. Faithful devotees thronged in large number. All were anxious to have a view (Darshan) of the idol of Lord Jagannath seated in the chariot.

A great saint Shree Chaitanya Maha Prabhu arrived to have a Darshan of Lord Jagannath in the procession. His devotees had reserved a standing place from which he could easily see the idol

of Lord Jagannath. However, it became difficult for him to have a clear Darshan because in this huge crowd, an old woman climbed on his shoulders for the Darshan of Lord Jagannath.

Some devotees saw this and became angry. They started scolding the old woman. However Shree Chaitanya stopped them and said, "Well brothers, this old lady is a real devotee. She was not aware of the fact that she had climbed upon my shoulders. Her desire for Darshan was very intense. We will attain devotion par excellence only when such an acute desire will overtake us and we will forget the consciousness of the body. Then and only then will our lives become blissful."

- (3) It was the medieval age of the saints and devotees. The tradition of their lives was to bathe in the river Ganges of divine love, become pious, inspire the common people to follow this path and live a godly life in which there is peace of mind and bliss of soul.

A noble and respected saint was staying in a small, modest and simple house, about five miles from the city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan. He had made his life an ideal one by devotion to God, respect to others, plain living and high thinking. Many aspirants visited this simple house for the Darshan of this saint. They derived inspiration from his sermon which was rich in experience.

Once a disciple told him, "Well Sir, the queen of Jaipur has arrived to see you. How shall we welcome her?" He replied simply, "Let her come. She comes here as a devotee. No special welcome is required."

The disciple brought the Queen to the saint's residence. The Queen bowed to the saint and seated on a seat befitting her status. The saint delivered a short sermon. She was delighted and later asked the permission to leave after presenting many golden ornaments as a gift to the saint. The saint protested much but the Queen said, "We cannot take back the things that we have given" and left.

On the very next day the saint invited the poor and the suffering

masses from the adjoining villages and gave away all the ornaments in charity. The disciples said, “Noble Sir, if you had retained some, we could have used the same for a better welcome for the future guests.”

The saint expressed his unflinching devotion to God through these words, “The Almighty who gives to us, will give to the guests also.” This is the noble life of a saint. It was this saint Nabhaji who wrote the famous work ‘Bhaktamala’ (devotional songs).

20

Renunciation

Voluntary association with anything except the Soul, becomes instrumental in disturbing the spiritual progress of an aspirant. Non-association with such objects, with this clear conviction, is called renunciation (Tyag or Tyag-Dharma).

In worldly dealings, worthy persons not only shun the use of things belonging to others, but even give up the belief of their ownership of own objects such as clothes, house, money, furniture, etc. Similarly in the spiritual world, an aspirant who desires liberation, gives up attachment to all worldly things including his body. This is the mode of evolution of true renunciation, which takes shape

TYAG-DHARMA

in the life of an aspirant with right knowledge and right conviction.

Usefulness of Renunciation In Life

Indian cultural attitude has always given great importance to renunciation in life. Even today in the materialistic society (Kaliyug), person who renounces some or all valuable things from his life occupies a very high place in the hearts of the countrymen.

On one side, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhashchandra Bose, Jaiprakash Narayan, Ravishankar Maharaj and similar distinguished persons have given due importance to renunciation in the public life of our country.

On the other side, saintly personalities like Swami Vivekanand, Swami Ramtirth, Acharya Shantisagar Maharaj, Shree Ganeshprasad Varni, Shrimad Buddhisagarji Maharaj and other saints have associated their lives with spiritual Sadhana and selflessly devoted themselves to their life mission with a true spirit of renunciation.

In brief, even today, the status of a renunciate person (Yogi) is far higher and more respected than that of a non-renunciate person (Bhogi).

Success of Renunciation

Renunciation is possible only when an aspirant fully knows what is to be renounced. In reality, ignorance and perversions are to be renounced. For accomplishing this, the ignorance consisting of i-ness (ego) and mine-ness (possesiveness, ownership) in the body and worldly objects must go.

Again impure emotions like passion, anger, greed, pride, etc. should be discarded by the aspirant. This is to be done with a clear understanding that these impure emotional states lead to suffering and anxiety. They are impious, and opposed to the natural inclination of the soul and therefore, deserve to be totally shunned.

Just as these feelings of ignorance and the like, deserve to be discarded, even those incidents and objects which help to nourish these feelings also deserve to be curtailed. The great saints (Acharyas)

know that the common people of the world would not be able to remain above these impure states in the midst of social circumstances. They have therefore always inspired us to take resort to and practice the path of renunciation.

Even true renunciation is not successful without resorting to constructive spiritual progress. Let the aspirant therefore really affirm, "I am pure life-force, that is Soul. I am not the owner of other worldly object." Then he engrosses himself in the contemplation of the true and pure Self. With this, the rise of other passionate feelings will come to an end. Only this is known as the supreme renunciation.

In general, first the aspirant should renounce the following :

Gambling, wine, hunting, going to prostitutes, meat-eating, theft, and adultery. Then the aspirant should resort to the following order of renunciation : Renunciation of great sins, abandonment of eating at night, giving up food not worthy of taking, abandoning stage by stage all matters that lead to worldly attachments whether words, things or individuals. They should do this with due enthusiasm, patience and diligence after having been made aware of it either through noble preceptors or scriptures.

Glory of Renunciation

1. Renunciation by a great person consists of the voluntary limitation of one's worldly possessions along with the conviction that, "If I were to view things rightly, nothing is mine except my Soul, which has a nature of pure knowledge and pure vision."
2. The desire for sensual pleasures and mundane objects are essentially the causes of bondage. How will any aspirant then, allow the accumulation of, or attachment to, such objects ?
3. "Self-control is conducive to happiness and its absence to sorrow." On listening this from the wise, who will fall victim to lack of self-control ? He, who practices self-control, also renounces mundane worldly objects as they provide the basis for misery.

4. The practice of self-control and the process of renunciation should usually go hand in hand. To illustrate, a person accepts and accumulates gold and wealth, clothes, ornaments and other things as also family, friends, servants, horses and cows. However, with the dawn of Self-knowledge, one curtails these belongings as well as the attachment for them, so that one can fix one's mind firmly on the path of liberation.
5. Charity may also be considered as part of a householder's renunciation. When one limits one's covetousness and uses one's wealth in appropriate religious and philanthropical works, the virtue of charity develops in one's life.
6. False convictions are to be abandoned with determination and vision. This means giving up the false belief, "I am the body," and being firm in the conviction, "I am the indestructible element, the Soul." Again, abandoning passionate feelings like anger, pride, covetousness, jealousy, and abuse is internal renunciation. The four main types of hindrances which require to be overcome are : (a) society, (b) family, (c) body and (d) provocative thoughts. One should try to overcome these hindrances and gradually become free from their bondage.
7. It is the illusory attachment that leads a person to be engrossed in objects of sensual enjoyment, makes one experience their over-powering influence, makes the mind tardy, induces the bondage of Karma, and in the end, leads one to a series of sorrows. The renunciation of this attachment is therefore, the chief means to end all sorrows.
8. The supreme virtue of renunciation is cultivated at its best, indeed, by the monks, who have renounced all their belongings, have cut off all worldly ties and have untiringly and delightfully devoted their life to the Sadhana of self-control, penance, meditation and detachment. Salutations at the feet of these great incarnations of salvation !

Living Examples of Renunciation

- (1) In August 1955, the famous Jain Acharya Shree Shantisagarji, aged 82, had a cataract in his eye and had become physically very weak. He was at Kunthalgiri in Maharashtra.

It is a rule with Jain Munis to move from one place to another with proper care and vision. However, due to the cataract and weakness, it became difficult for Shantisagarji to observe this rule. He therefore started feeling that his body was useless for further spiritual enhancement (Sadhana). He resolved voluntarily to undertake a fast unto death (Sallekhana).

On August 14, 1955, he gave up food. Slowly his body started getting weaker and weaker. However, his Soul became firm in self-control, penance, complete detachment and unique renunciation. Jains and non-Jains in millions came for paying respect to him. The President of India, Dr. Rajendraprasad, Vice-President Dr Radhakrishnan and many learned people came to pay their respects to him and listen to his sermons. Ultimately, on the 35th day of his fast, on September 18, 1955, he attained death in a spirit of equanimity and in deep meditation (Samadhi). Our salutations to such great sages, who have the will power to resort to a voluntary and planned abandonment of their bodies that are so dear to all !

- (2) It was the time of the rule of Queen Elizabeth in England. A British battalion was sent to Holland for a battle. In the battle near the city of Jutfen, the famous commander Sir Philip Sidney was wounded. He was thirsty. Some water was brought to him with great effort. As one of the soldiers was just on the point of putting that water in his mouth, the commander's eyes fell on a near by wounded soldier, who was looking at water with anxious eyes. Sir Philip Sidney instructed his men to give water to that soldier with a remark, "His need for water is greater than mine."

Right from childhood, Sidney had cultivated the habit of the renunciation of self-interest. He could renounce the much needed

water in favor of another soldier only through will power acquired by constant such practice.

- (3) Shrimad Rajachandra is recognised as a man of high repute for spiritual knowledge and attainment. Once, his chief disciple Shree Lalluji said, “Respected Sir, I have renounced a wealthy family, aged mother, two wives, and a son. Still I do not experience fulfillment.”

Shrimad Rajachandra replied, “What have you renounced ? You have renounced two women, but towards how many more your eyes turn during monkhood life ? You have renounced one house, but with how many more is your mind burdened ? You have renounced one son, but how many more does your heart get attached to ?”

Lalluji had a simple heart. He pondered over his inner self and felt ashamed. He immediately admitted, “Sir, I have not renounced anything!” Shrimad Rajachandra then replied, “Now you are a real renouncer.”

Shrimad Rajachandra’s view was this : “One cannot have a true knowledge of Self, until one experiences fulfillment in one’s renunciation, and not the pride.”

21

Universal Friendliness

If we were to look at the fundamental reality, the soul in every creature is just like the soul in us. He who realizes this truth, genuinely develops a special sense of friendliness with every living being of the universe, and we may call this wonderful feeling “universal friendliness”.

Deep meditation (Samadhi) leads to the success in spiritual progress (Sadhana). Samadhi can be attained by right meditation, and one important factor in the process of meditation is a spirit of equanimity towards all souls (Jivas).

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The adverse thoughts are, ‘These Jivas are my enemies, they inflict pain on me, these are my adversaries, they insult me, these are not on my side’. If an aspirant nourishes such adverse thoughts directly or indirectly, no feeling of friendliness can develop in him; and without a firm feeling of such friendliness, the mind cannot progress in the real thoughts of God or meditation.

Development of Friendliness

Acquiring true knowledge is a must for Sadhana of universal friendliness. The knowledge acquired should be applied in the day-to-day working of practical life. If a businessman looks upon all souls as equal to his own, how will he deceive any customers by delivering goods of inferior quality ? How will a teacher show prejudice to one or the other student ? How will a person speak ill of other persons? Thus, we can understand that with the dawning of universal friendliness in one’s life, one cannot possibly make adverse worldly day-to-day dealings and will rather proceed to cultivate general goodwill towards all.

This applies to an average good citizen of any country or ordinary aspirant. Supreme friendliness can be cultivated only by great Munis or monks who have acquired highest self-control. Their universal friendliness is of supreme quality. Their spirit of friendliness has spread and pervaded not only to all human beings in the world, but also to all animals, insects and even vegetable-life ! Munis therefore take care not to inflict the slightest pain, insult and loss on any living being in their life.

To understand the lives of these great people, deep understanding and their personal association are essential. Without these, one cannot understand universal friendliness. A unique atmosphere of peace and delight is usually experienced in presence of such personalities, in whose life this friendliness has reached its climax. That was the reason why the ancient great monks, Rishis and self-inspired Acharyas of this country used to live in and moved through jungles fearlessly even in the midst of violent animals. This was, because the intensified spirit of friendliness of these great souls deeply influenced

the violent animals and overwhelmed their inborn enmity. Then they lived in peace and non-enmity. Let us be inspired by these great people and discard outright the narrow mentality that prevails and persists in our family, cast, creed, sect or society. Let us show real affection and regard for all human beings and creatures as we show it to ourselves; then only the foundation of our spiritual life can be solidly laid.

If we were to think over the above topic only superfluously and by mere argument, it will sound impossible. However, if we think over it deeply and look at the lives of saints practicing supreme Samadhi, it can be proved to be true.

Glory of Friendliness

1. May the holy stream of friendliness continue to flow in my heart. I always wish the whole universe goodwill and prosperity.
2. Know the Self, know it at once. Cultivate a spirit of equanimity with all souls, let this be carved in our heart.
3. I experience equality with all souls and enmity towards none. I give up all desires and aspire to Samadhi.
4. He is a real person of God, who respects all in the world, criticizes none, and steadies his speech, passions and mind. Blessed indeed is the mother of such person.
5. Always cultivate a spirit of benevolence for all, delight for the virtuous, compassion for the afflicted and tolerance for the ill behaved. This forms the basis of prosperity and spiritual life.

Living Examples of Friendliness

- (1) Shashibhushan Bandopadhyay was a very successful and famous advocate of Calcutta who lived in the early part of the 19th century. He was well known for his honesty, compassion, and philanthropic attitude of life. He was working as a government pleader in Hugli near Calcutta. Once, at noon in the hot summer of May, he hired a horse-cart and went to the house of a well-known gentleman for some work. It was a

pleasant surprise for the gentleman. When the work was over, and it was the time of departure, he said, “Sir ! You could have sent a note with your servant instead of having taken the trouble of coming to my place in this hot sun. I would have visited you.”

The pleader replied, “Yes, it occurred to me in the beginning, but when I thought of this scorching heat, I did not feel it right to send the servant. If he had come, he would have been either walking or on a bicycle, instead of a horse-cart and in that case, he would have suffered more this terrible heat. With this in mind, I preferred to come myself.”

What a humane treatment of the servant it was ! He looked upon the servant also as a friend !

(2) Acharya Shri Buddhisagarji was a great Jain monk of Gujarat who lived in the early part of the 20th century. He was a great Yogi, scholar, and historian. He was the founder of the popular pilgrimage place “Mahudi” in northern Gujarat. He was also the author of many high standard spiritual books.

Acharya Shri was in the habit of sitting in a nearby cave for meditation at night. Now and then violent animals used to wander around the cave. Shree Mohanlal Bhakharia notes, “Once, while he was seated in meditation, a black cobra six feet long entered the cave. I got up at once and warned him, “Sir ! There is a big cobra nearby !”

The Acharya opened his eyes and said, “Why are you afraid ? A cobra delights in the company of saints and Munis !” Surely there was no fear in the heart of a saint who has a clear vision of a soul similar to his in all living beings ! He experiences a spirit of friendliness towards all, be they violent or otherwise. This is real friendliness indeed !

About 60 years ago, Shree Buddhisagarji was spending last few days of his life. Dr. Cooper, a famous surgeon of the city of Anand (Gujarat), had examined him and declared that the body of Shree

Buddhisagarji had now only little time to live. However, the Acharya remained engrossed in the discourse of knowledge and meditation, unaffected by this declaration.

- (3) About 100 years ago, a saint, Dwarkadasji by name, was meditating (Sadhana) in a holy place called Hrishikesh in the foothill of Himalay. He was totally concentrated in the spiritual ecstasy and remained naked (Digambar or sky as clothe). A British officer was hunting nearby and he killed a tiger but the female tiger escaped. As the officer was proceeding to the forest to kill the female tiger also, Dwarkadasji told him, "Please do not kill the female tiger today, she is very much pained by the death of the tiger."

After a while, as Dwarkadasji was lying down, the tigress came. As the officer was seated on the elevated platform (Manchdo) to shoot her, Dwarkadasji requested him not to shoot. The tigress came near Dwarkadasji, sniffed him and left towards deep woods. The officer was simply stunned. He inquired, "Why did the tigress not kill you ?" The reply was "I do not even think of killing anyone. How will others kill me then ?"

This shows how violent cruel animals forget their enmity in the presence of saints who have adopted real friendliness in their lives.

Truthfulness

Background

Truth is what is genuinely true. One who has full faith in this Truth, one who accepts it, is a truthful person and his best feeling is truthfulness.

General Nature of Truth

The conventional meaning of Truth is well-known to the society. An object visioned or known at a specific time, in a specific manner, under specific circumstances is true at that time, in that manner and under those circumstances. To illustrate, “India won independence on 15th August in 1947. My average monthly income is 25,000 Rupees. The idol of Bahubali Swami, in

the village of Shravanbelgola (in the Karnatak state) is 57 feet in height.” These are conventional truths or factual information.

Now, the practice of Truth in the day-to-day events of one's life or in all other matters is the cherished goal of an aspirant. One who is successful in this type of practice is conventionally recognized as a truthful person in society. This is all about conventional truth.

Attainment of Absolute Truth

Let us now turn to Absolute Truth, which dominates in spiritual progress. The ultimate aim of spiritual Sadhana is realization of one's true Self. It is revealed in direct proportion to destruction of the amount of bondage of Karmas, and this in turn, is achieved by removing the two main causes of bondage of Karma : (a) lack of Self-knowledge and (b) lack of self-control. Let us now examine, how this could be accomplished.

The way to Self-purification is Self-knowledge, and the way to Self-knowledge is through contemplation of the Self. In order to be able to practice Self-contemplation, the non-Self contemplation should be curtailed. It is difficult to turn the flow of our thoughts inwards to our Soul, while we remain engrossed in the outward objects of the world and believe them.

One should therefore have the clear conviction that only one's own pure Soul is truth and immortal, all other objects in the world are destructible and momentary. The latter are thus unreal when looked at from the salvation point of view. The aspirant who knows, believes and adores this fact, realizes the Absolute Truth in stages. Thus the reward of the practice of truthfulness is Self-knowledge and Self-realization.

Persons desirous of Absolute Truth should consider, to their advantage, that perfect truth is attained by developing a sense of relativity-oriented multi-dimensional vision. This is because all objects in the universe are multifaceted in their basic nature. It is essential therefore, to develop multi-faceted vision of the objects.

To illustrate, describing an elephant as like a wall, a wooden

pestle, a pillar, a rope, or winnowing basket is true, from the points of view of its back, trunk, foot, tail and ear respectively. However, if we mistake the part as to be the whole, our knowledge regarding the elephant remains partial, imperfect and therefore defective. This principle applies to all other forms of knowledge also.

If we want to accomplish perfect and authentic knowledge about any object or topic we should think over it from several points of view. One should apply at any particular time, a viewpoint by adopting which purity of the Self gets enhanced while other points of view should be made subsidiary to it. In the absence of the application of such well-planned multi-faceted knowledge, only unilateral and imperfect knowledge would be accomplished, which is naturally defective.

It is therefore necessary that those aspirants who desire to follow in essence the path of eternal bliss and perfect knowledge, should adopt the principle of multidimensional view (Anekantvad) or understanding the objects in various facets and obtain comprehensive knowledge by combining all viewpoints.

Learned Acharyas have propounded that the essence of an object is its true nature and further, it is only when we understand this essential nature that our knowledge of that object becomes true. We all, therefore, should strive to realize the Self through attainment of Truth.

Glory of Truth

1. There is no enlightenment in life like knowledge, no austerity like truth, no sorrow like attachment to worldly objects and no happiness like renunciation.
2. Truth is only truth, it is eternal and unified. However, it seems to be diversified only because of one's imagination, the lack of genuine knowledge and true faith.
3. True religion always comprises truthfulness. Untruth can never become a religion (Dharma). Dharma gets concealed and

covered up in all those instances, where untrue presumptions prevail.

4. He, who really conceives Truth, and acts up to it by mind, speech and body, beholds the Divine. Through Truth, one can attain clairvoyance or even omniscience and get liberation.
5. Truth by itself is illumination. Being self-luminous in nature, it cannot be hidden, like a shining lamp. Truth is therefore beyond all concealment.
6. He, whose way of life is well-established in truthfulness, for him truth is not a matter of prescription or prohibition but a way of life.
7. Let the truth be woven in our day-to-day affairs, so that one may experience peace, and fearlessness. Truthfulness also usually bestows upon the person, wide-spread respect, trustworthiness and veneration. One can be successful in achieving self-control, austerity and other spiritual practices by Truth. People with due discrimination, never give up Truth even at the cost of their life.

Living Examples of Truthfulness

- (1) Pal Chowdhary was a social leader and businessman in Bengal who lived in the 19th century. He was famous for his honesty and philanthropic works. He was the follower of Lord Shri Krishna.

Once he bargained a sale of salt to a man who left a certain amount of money as a deposit with him. The man did not return in time to buy salt because of some difficulty and did not even come for his deposit. Meanwhile, due to scarcity of salt, the price of salt shot up very high.

After some time Pal Chowdhary sold the salt purchased by that man and credited the amount of the profit of that quantity of salt in the account of that person; and handed over the amount to him

when he eventually returned.

Another was a transaction of rice with an Englishman. The transaction was just oral and the quantity was also not fixed. The price of rice tripled after the transaction. Pal Chowdhary called the man to take the delivery of rice from his storage. When a few bags of rice had been loaded, that Englishman said, "Brother, this is enough for me. My steamer will sink if I take excessive advantage of the truthfulness of a pious religious man like you."

These examples show that Pal Chowdhary had devoted his whole life to truthfulness and keeping his word.

(2) In the 19th century, Calcutta University was quite famous for advanced study, and students from all parts of the country, came there for higher education.

One of the rules for admission to this University was that the student must have reached the minimum age of 16 years at the time of admission.

A new student who was only 14 years old, wrote 16 years to be his age in the admission form, as all the other students were doing. He did not know the rule. During his first year, at the University he came to know about the rule and realized his mistake.

He felt deeply sorry for his false statement, approached the principal of his college and made a confession. He was told that now the mistake could not be corrected. He approached the Registrar of the University and received the same reply. What was to be done now ? How to get his mistake corrected ? As a punishment for giving false statement, he discontinued his University education for two years ! This student was Shree Ashvinikumar Dutt, who turned out later as a great educationalist in the state of Bengal.

(3) It was the year 1814, when landlords were very powerful in Bengal. In a small village of Hoogli district, there was a landlord named Ramanand Rai. He was a liar, proudy, unjust, and utterly selfish. He had monopolized power in his own

hands and would act only at his own will.

Once he had a conflict with an ordinary man. The landlord decided to assert his power and therefore raised a false allegation against him and he needed somebody as a witness.

A person named Khudiram lived in this village. He was truthful and he loved justice. The landlord thought this man would give evidence in his favor. He approached him and said, "I hope you will come to the court and give evidence in my favor."

Khudiram replied, "I always state what is true." The landlord said, "No, you have to state in the court, just what I say."

Khudiram did not agree.

This enraged the landlord so much that he decided to take revenge on him. He snatched away his vast land within six months and auctioned his house. Ultimately, Khudiram was forced to leave his native village and had to settle down in a village called Kamarapuker.

Khudiram stuck to Truth and had to give up his land, house, wealth, and native place. He became pious, religious, devoted to God, and led a very simple life then. This Khudiram was the father of the famous saint Shree Ramkrishna Paramhans.

Straightforwardness

Background

The virtue of being straightforward is also the virtue that we sometimes call by the name Frankness. It means consistency in the activities of mind, speech and the body, i.e. to say exactly what is in one's mind and to do exactly what one says.

A good deal of progress in the practice of this virtue can be achieved, if we try sincerely to act upon our words and thus shed off any such tendencies as complexity, crookedness, deception and trickery from our day to day activities. Straightforwardness is the basic virtue of the true Self.

However, a person subjects himself to ignorance and greed, and follows the path of

deceitful conduct. He tells himself, "Who can read my mind ? I shall see to it that nobody knows my mind and shall achieve what I desire by deceptive talk and treacherous behavior." Such a person, creates so complex and so wide a network of deceptive worldly affairs around him, that he cannot manage to come out of it. As a result he undergoes various miseries.

Importance of Straightforwardness

Straightforwardness is a virtue which must be developed by all aspirants. Spirituality (Sadhana) does not dawn without it. Therefore, great sages have recommended aspirants to achieve straight-forwardness. He who is not straightforward does not even gain entry onto the path of salvation. How can he then be fit for taking up religious vows ? Under the circumstances, development of the virtue of straightforwardness is indispensable for every aspirant because of its multifarious utility in his life.

The method of development of this virtue is more or less on the same lines as has been described in the chapters on Forgiveness (Ch.1) and Contentment (Ch.15). This will make the acquisition of the virtue of straightforwardness easy, by conquering its opposite, which is deceit. Deceit may be likened to a nail in the foot. Once it pierces the skin, the person concerned loses his peace of mind and remains restless.

Nobody ever trusts a deceitful person; even his family members view him constantly with suspicion. Whatever promises he may give, constant fear persists among people of the possibility of a breach of trust. Such a person fails to win any regard either in society or in the path of righteousness.

The life of a straightforward person is free from worry, and becomes natural, fearless, pious, and therefore righteous. Real peace can be experienced with the development of straightforwardness in life, and therefore, all aspirants should continuously strive to develop it with great zeal.

Glory of Straightforwardness

1. Unfortunate indeed is he who has not calmed down his passions, has no detachment in the life, and who is neither straightforward nor tolerant of afflictions.
2. The person endowed with virtues like broad-based vision, impartiality, straightforwardness and control over senses, deserves most to realize the ultimate Truth.
3. All other virtues fail completely in a deceitful person. A person of straightforwardness therefore, excludes all deceitful acts from his life.
4. God will forgive all other vices but not that of deceit, especially when it is practiced in the name of religion or God.
5. Many great people practiced straightforwardness through the medium of the company of children, e.g.,
 - 1 Shree Telang Swami had a cart in which he seated children while he drew it. He tried to study and acquire the simple and innocent nature of children.
 - 1 Gladstone, once the Prime Minister of Britain, played with children and shared innocent joy with them.
 - 1 Lord Jesus Christ and great poet Nanalal have eulogized the simple nature of children.
 - 1 The Bhaktisutra states that the best devotee is one like a child.

Thus children have inspired many great men to acquire straightforwardness.

Living Examples of Straightforwardness

- (1) In Bombay, Shrimad Rajchandra and Mahatma Gandhi were once discussing compassion. They pondered over it and discussed whether or not any item made from leather should be used. It was resolved that for professional and industrial purposes, leather may be used, but not for personal uses.

Gandhi inquired, "What is there in the cap that you have put on?"

Rajchandraji did not have even the slightest idea that his cap had leather strip in it; he never checked for it. Without argument, Shrimad Rajchandra removed the leather strip from his cap. This speaks volumes for his preparedness to follow straightforwardness, even in small events of life.

- (2) Chironjabai was a great pious Jain lady who lived around the year 1900 near the city of Jhansi in northern India. She lived a very religious life and was instrumental in the spiritual development of Shri Ganeshprasad Varniji, whom she had adopted as a religious son.

Shri Varniji, a great saint, has written about one incident in his life regarding his mother Chironjabai. He stated that, when his mother was about 60 years old, he had to spend lot of time in serving her. He then felt that if he had no mother, he would be able to progress on the path of Self-realization far more quickly. Once he actually complained loudly, "In this life, no one is related to others spiritually, all are selfish. I have simply wasted these years of my life !"

The mother replied, "Dear boy ! Now I am old and of no use to you. This is what you feel. For the last 30 years, I have looked after you as a son, but all the while, your happiness only has been my purpose. Now I am old, I can no more look after you. Do what pleases you, but know one thing. If you abandon me through anger or because you are tired, it will be only a pretence and your renunciation will be only a show. It will be without the spirit of quietude and detachment."

Shri Varniji was simply stunned by these words. He regretted and gave up the idea to separate himself from his respected mother. He had not conquered deceit in the heart and only made a show of being free from deceit. This was pretence on his part. He now resolved to take recourse to the path of straightforwardness - the path of bliss.

24

Principles of Karma

Background

In the realm of spiritual science, the place of the rules of one's actions i.e. Karmas is even higher than the place of the law of gravitation in physical science. All theistic philosophies accept the principle that person invariably reaps the fruits of his actions. The doctrine of Karma is the backbone (the main supporting element) of the spiritual life.

All Karmas of a person which are intentionally carried out require the attention of the mind. The influx and bondage of Karma with the soul is

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mainly related to the degree of mental involvement during the activity. The fruits of these Karmas are inevitable in due course of time. This has been counselled in the scriptures and propounded by the mystic sages in various ways.

One cannot be free from the bonds of Karmas even if countless centuries (or lives) pass away. Whatever good or bad action the person (Jiv or Soul) has performed, he is necessarily rewarded or punished.

Thus, even though we have been enlightened on the doctrine of Karma by various philosophers, its detailed and most subtle form has been scientifically laid down and analyzed by the Jain Tirthankars (Jinas - the omniscient ones). We will now explain it briefly.

Law of Bondage of Karma

The main reason of bondage of Karma with the soul is the individual's thought process. The principle of bondage of Karma functions mainly in accordance with the thought process associated with the soul. Even though the chief regulating cause here is the internal feelings of the soul, the associated activities of the body, speech and the mind also act as secondary causes of bondage.

The whole universe is pervaded with subtle particles with potentiality to get transformed to Karmic molecules (Dravya Karma). When the soul is actuated by passions, such as greed, anger, lust, compassion, friendship, etc. these particles are transformed into various Karmas and get attached to the Soul.

Let us take one example. Suppose somebody becomes proudy. Now depending upon the intention of pride, its intensity and the activities of the individual, the particles of Karma will get attached to his soul.

Just as food gets digested and transformed automatically into blood, flesh, bones, semen, marrow, etc. the particles of Karma take typical forms befitting the attitude of the soul and get firmly bound to it.

Characteristics of Karma

At every moment new Karma particles attach to the soul through the activities of body, mind, and speech. At the same time old Karma particles detach from the soul after producing the results. This process occurs simultaneously and continuously in every living being.

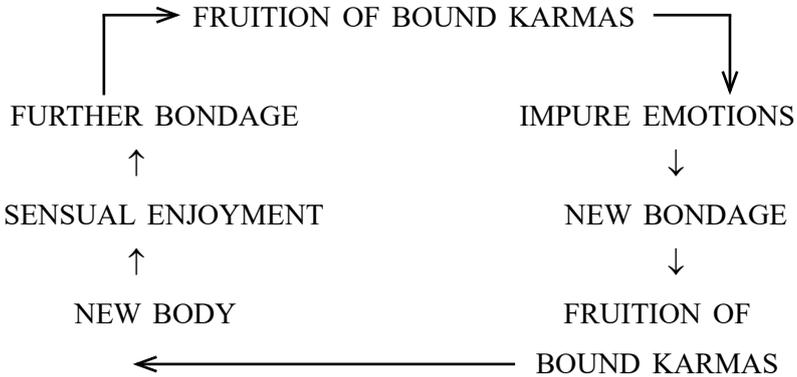
Bondage of Karma Is of Four Types

1. **Prakruti-Bandh (Type of Karma) :** The original nature of the soul is infinite power, bliss, knowledge, vision and so on. The Karmas that obstruct the original nature of the soul, such as knowledge, power, vision, or other faculties is called Prakruti-Bandh. (pertains to which nature of the soul is obscured)
2. **Sthiti-Bandh (Period of Bondage) :** After certain time, the Karma will reward or punish the soul. The duration before they produce the result is called Sthiti-Bandh (pertains to how long it obscures the particular nature of the soul).
3. **Anubhag-Bandh (Degree of Obstructive Capacity) :** Again the Karmas have variable capacity to obstruct the virtues of the soul. To what degree it obscures the nature of the soul is called Anubhag-Bandh.
4. **Pradesh-Bandh (Quantum of Particles) :** The quantity of Karma particles that get involved in bondage with the soul.

Thus, bound by the various types of Karmas, the soul suffers the miseries of numerous transmigrations of birth, life and death.

Ignorant worldly people continue their activities in accordance with the fruits of their previous Karmas and mistakenly believe that they know the true Self. This course of action becomes instrumental in leading to further bondage of new Karmas. This way the cycle of mundane existence of birth-growth-decay and death continues infinitely.

Transmigration Cycle



Distinctive Varieties of The Rise of Karma

The multiple variegated forms of human beings that we find around us in this Universe, are due to the fruition of the innumerable varieties of Karmas. Life as a human, divine being, animal, and hell being are all acquired through different Karmas. Such variations can easily be conceived by observing the differences in the height, weight, facial features, complexion and constitution of different individuals, and differences also in intelligence, inclinations, health, life-span, family circumstances, and other characteristics. Let it be clearly understood that these innumerable variations are due to the fruition of varied Karmas that the soul (Jiv) has bound with itself previously (in previous lives).

Reward of The Knowledge of Karma Doctrine

When the aspirant, truly gets acquainted with the rules of the doctrine of Karma, he is not disturbed or illumined by immensely variable and unpredictable astonishing events which are continuously happening around him in the world. This is because he has really acquired the scientific knowledge of the cause and effect principle of all these worldly events and processes. When he absorbs this divine doctrine through right knowledge and due enthusiasm in his life, he himself becomes firm in spiritual wisdom. With further spiritual practice, the concept of one's own true Self is beheld and perceived more and more clearly. The belief of oneness and attachment to

the non-Self and the impure mental states resulting from the rise of previous Karmas is gradually dispelled and eventually shattered completely.

Thus, through proper discrimination between the Soul, the Karmas and their fruition, one's impure states get gradually subdued. A clear comprehension and conviction of the eternal existence of one's true Self, being of the nature of indivisible, pure knowledge and supersensuous bliss, is accomplished through Self-realization.

The aspirant is assisted in his spiritual progress by destruction of illusion & attachment and attains the state of supreme peace & equanimity (Samadhi) by acquiring real knowledge of the rules of Karma. He should evidently make incessant efforts to do so.

Effect of The Variegated Strange Karmas

1. How strange is the law of Karma ! The fact that even a noble soul like the king Yudhishtir (of Mahabharat) had to give up his royal powers and live in the forest for 12 long years, and one more year in a disguised form !
2. By which law was it destined that a great emperor like Napoleon, who conquered half the world in his youth had to die of cancer on an island (Elba) where nobody was there to help him.
3. Think about the sovereign king Mohammad Gazani whose one word could save or end many lives, spent his last days as an insane house prisoner.
4. Isn't it strange that great saints like Gnaneshwar, Shankaracharya and Vivekanand who were celibate all their life (Bal-Brahmachari) and Shrimad Rajchandra died young (in prime of their lives)?
5. All around us, we can see so many strange and surprising events happening, such as some fools ruling governments and the learned having no power. A bird in India named Cuckoo has very sweet voice being inauspicious black and the deceptive

fish-eating crane has fine white wings. An illiterate has all the luxury and a scholar works for a small salary. These are but a few of such contradictions resulting from Karmas.

An Example Explaining The Law of Karma

A noble teacher and his pupil were travelling on a road, adjoining a village. On one side they saw a strange scene. A serpent being attacked by thousands of ants.

The pupil saw the sad plight of the serpent and said, “Poor creature! How unhappy it is !”

Teacher, “Dear boy ! What could be done ? Everyone must experience the fruits of one’s actions.”

Pupil, “Sir ! What could be the possible sin of this serpent that it is in this sad plight ?”

Teacher, “If you remember, sometime ago we passed by a lake and you tried to stop a fisherman from fishing.”

Pupil, “Yes Sir ! The fisherman made fun of my advice.”

Teacher, “That fisherman has become this serpent in this life and the fish have acquired rebirth as ants. They are now united tormenting the serpent.”

If we feel angry on experiencing the fruits of our own past sinful acts, do we not actually give rise to new bad deeds ? If the aspirant constantly considers this, he can save himself from ill-deeds; he would perform actions only dispassionately with the aim of achieving the full purity of the Soul.

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Meditation

Background

The ordinary meaning of the word ‘meditation’ (Dhyan), is concentration of the mind. People constantly ponder over some object, individual or substance. The mind of every individual continues to shift in thoughts from one to the other and then to another object. Hence, the state of the human mind, pondering over worldly objects and things is known as ill-meditation (Durdhyan or bad concentration). All such meditations that hinder the spiritual progress (Sadhana) of the Self are to be given up. Let us enumerate here, the main types of bad concentration and then proceed to

DHYAN

understand meditation that leads us to right religion (Dharma).

Types of Bad Concentration Or Ill-Meditation (Arta Dhyān & Raudra Dhyān)

1. Contemplation caused by loss of the desired object or person.
2. Contemplation caused by association with an undesired object or person.
3. Contemplation on the suffering caused by diseases and other infirmities of the body.
4. Getting engrossed in the acquisition of happiness and pleasure in this or the higher world through religious deeds.
5. Experiencing happiness through feelings of violence.
6. Experiencing happiness through theft or lies.
7. Concentrating on the preservation of material goods for the enjoyment of worldly objects.

Meditation In Spiritual Life

The belief and feeling of “mine-ness” in the objects of the world arise from ignorance. Even the feelings of passion, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy can be considered as offsprings of ignorance. The types of meditation, which subdue these feelings and also lead to purity and steadiness of mind, are all useful and therefore beneficial to the aspirant.

Prerequisites For Meditation

1. Clear and Comprehensive Knowledge of the Meditator, Meditation and Ultimate Goal

The aspirant, who meditates, is the meditator. He therefore requires multifaceted knowledge of his own Self (i.e. meditator). He can acquire this varied and all-embracing knowledge through association with noble sages and proper study of authentic scriptures.

The process by which meditator wishes to achieve his goal of meditation and then remains engrossed in it is called as “experiment

of meditation.” So the goal of the aspirant is to achieve meditation as best as he could.

He concentrates for this goal in a variety of ways in accordance with his state of Sadhana, say in the form of a noble teacher (Guru-Dhyan), the supreme Soul (Prabhu-Dhyan), the flame of Soul (Soul Jyoti-Dhyan), or some other pure object. He must acquire thorough knowledge of his goal (Dhyey) on which he concentrates his mind. In the absence of thorough knowledge of this, his concentration will fail and his mind will start wavering.

2. Daily Routine

Keeping awfully busy in worldly pursuits during the day and then steadying the mind (meditation) all of a sudden, is almost impossible. Whatever may be the pursuits of the day, such as financial, social, pleasure-seeking, job, etc. should all be of such nature that they do not grossly blot the purity of the mind.

Just as a very dirty clothe can be cleaned only with a prolonged and complex process of washing, so also the mind. If it is grossly blotted and blemished with impurity, it can be purified and concentrated only with great efforts. The less the dirt on the mind, the easier it will be to purify and steady it.

Qualifications of The Meditator

One who can differentiate properly between Soul and Matter (Soul and non-Soul), is a real discriminator. Ascetic is the person who has cultivated a sense of detachment, with reference to the body, the world and sensual pleasures. He, whose internal desire is only for emancipation, is a real aspirant.

In spite of all difficulties, with patience and forbearance, he continues to be engrossed in meditation. Once he achieves it, he becomes more friendly, merciful and generous. All these qualifications enhance the capacity for true meditation. Supreme meditation is possible for those people who adopt the great vows such as non-violence and accomplish good control of the senses and mind.

Sadhana of Meditation

It would always be beneficial to resort to meditation in a sacred peaceful place, away from hustle-bustle. Regularity in food and observance of celibacy will assist in the steadiness of mind and body. Such an aspirant will achieve greater concentration in his meditation and will not feel lethargic and lazy.

Thus, the aspirant is expected to control food and sleep. Once the aspirant comes to know the pure form of Soul, from an enlightened preceptor, he can, with success, practice different types of meditation. The details of these different types of meditation can be fully reviewed in the scriptures of ancient sages. Here we give only a brief and practical survey of the subject.

The mental picture of the enlightened preceptor should be conceptualized in the middle of the eye-brows, or in the heart (i.e. in the left part of the chest); the thought process should then be repeatedly fixed on that pure, detached and equanimous image (Mudra). One should next envisage the image of God the supreme in his quiet, blissful and self-poised form in the heart and merge all inclinations of the mind in Him.

Aspirants in their advanced stage can practice meditation on Soul Jyoti (Soul is likened to the flame of a candle). If they envisage that the illumination from that divine light is disseminating and filling their entire being, they may experience special sublime happiness.

One can also practice any of the following types of meditation on the instructions of the enlightened preceptor and in accordance with one's own capacity and circumstances.

1. Meditation on the letters of the different Mantras.
2. Meditation related to various Yogic sounds (Nad).
3. Meditation related to the breathing process (Swas-Anupreksha).

Actually, the type of meditation is not all that important. What is more important is the purity and concentration of mind in moments of meditation. The practice of meditation is a long-drawn process indeed.

The Fruits of Meditation (Dhyan)

Meditation is the best form of religious austerity. The true meditator feels real happiness and peace of mind. He conquers ill-feelings and becomes free from mundane bondage (Karma-Bandhan), and achieves the state of Samadhi. Every aspirant should try to meditate regularly at least for a small period. What helps in achieving this, is company with enlightened preceptor, reading good scriptures, and good conduct.

Glory of Meditation

1. All emotions can be ousted by achieving repose in the Soul. Meditation on Soul, may therefore, be regarded as a panacea for all spiritual shortcomings.
2. Activity is meant for purity of the mind, but by itself cannot directly lead to Self-realization. Realization of the Self is possible only by pondering over Soul, and not through countless activities. The aspirant, who desires to realize the Self, should therefore, take recourse with compassionate enlightened preceptor who has realized the Self and should, under his guidance, ponder over and meditate on Soul.
3. The supreme liberation that eliminates birth, age, decay, and death cannot be attained by the aspirant, till he experiences the Supreme Reality, through well-guided contemplation of fundamentals (Tattvas).
4. There is no higher happiness or austerity than meditation on the Self. There is no better path of liberation than that.
5. When the aspirant experiences the Supreme Reality through meditation, all knots of illusion are destroyed completely, all doubts are set at rest, and all feelings of pleasure and pains (Karmas) cease.
6. Only the destruction of Karmas leads to liberation. Only right knowledge makes liberation possible, and only right meditation leads to right knowledge. Meditation is therefore immensely beneficial to the aspirant.

7. Gentleness of mind and senses, healthiness, a compassionate outlook of life, fragrance of the body, minimization of excretions, aura of divine light, purity, delight of the mind and sublime gentle speech - these are the usual traits of a person, who reposes in advanced meditation.
8. Having assimilated the preaching of the true preceptor, one who attains real meditation through tranquility of mind can acquire the series of praiseworthy things such as knowledge, wealth, health, longevity, contentment, supreme worship and emancipation.

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Principle of Relativity

It is obvious that many different characteristics are visible in every object in the world. If therefore, we are inclined to have true knowledge of the objects, we will have to cultivate the vision that embraces all those traits. If we know an object, just by one or two of its traits, knowledge of other traits will not possibly dawn on our mind. The knowledge that is not multidimensional, is imperfect and therefore, not totally authentic. It is therefore proper that we accept the principle of relativity and desire authentic knowledge of an object thereby.

**SAPEKSHATANO SIDDHANT
(ANEKANTVAD AND SYADVAD)**

APPLICATION IN DAILY-LIFE

In our daily life, we have well accepted and adopted the principle of relativity. To illustrate, though everyone is an individual, he is somebody's son, father, husband, uncle, employer or employee. He is, as compared to others, fair skinned or dark skinned, tall or short, intelligent or foolish. We deal with others precisely in accordance with our worldly relations with them. Our dealing is not the same with everybody.

In old age, when one writes a will, one generally gives the maximum share of one's property to one's spouse and children. The rest goes to the other relatives, like brothers, sisters, and parents and a fixed amount is set aside for religious and charitable purposes. Thus, our worldly dealing with all persons proceed in compliance with our relations with them. So, in our dealings in life, we follow the principle of relativity.

In the realm of ultimate Reality, as in our worldly dealings, this principle of relativity explains to us, in a unique manner, the science of Truth. This vision of relativity is highly beneficial and therefore useful to us, for grasping the true nature of the soul and for progress on the path of liberation. If the soul is absolutely pure, the effort for its purification by Sadhana is not necessary. Again, if the soul is absolutely impure by nature, no effort can make it pure. This is because it is not possible for an object to change its inherent nature.

Some philosophers state that perfect liberation is possible only through knowledge. But if we accept this view, then good conduct, self-control, austerity, renunciation, detachment will prove to be meaningless. Again, if we believe that liberation is possible only through good conduct, how will its adoption be possible without knowing the precise nature of self-control, austerity and renunciation? No real ascetic discipline or self-control is attainable, without true knowledge about the subjects concerned.

The attainment of liberation is not therefore possible through

the path of good conduct alone. We know things by enlightenment, but if real faith and conviction do not evolve in the heart, the mind remains full of doubts and hesitancy, with the result that taking recourse to the path of liberation becomes difficult. Genuine faith is therefore required for the attainment of liberation.

In this manner, the principle of relativity is very beneficial to souls desiring liberation through progress on the path of Sadhana. People who have mastered the principles governing the path of liberation, explain that success is possible through genuine faith (Samyak Darshan), true knowledge (Samyak Gnan) and righteous conduct (Samyak Charitra).

Again, one question arises : “If the direct path of liberation is of the nature of absolute experience (Nirvikalp Samadhi) of Soul, how will the attainment of liberation be possible ?” The reply will be this : The impressions of Existence (Sat) gets a firm hold on the Soul and enhance its prowess. Give heat to an iron-rod, and it can take any shape. Dirty clothes, soaked in soap and rubbed get cleaned. Only then can a dye (color or indigo), be applied to them uniformly. In a similar manner, just as the prowess of Soul is enhanced by the practice of the Sadhana of dualistic (Savikalp) knowledge, vision and conduct, the experience of absolute Samadhi (Nirvikalp) is quickened and its experience grows deeper.

The aspirant gets liberated when the stigma of all actions is washed out by the prowess of deep Nirvikalp Samadhi at its appropriate stage. Thus, the prowess of the practice of Savikalp Sadhana leads to the attainment and success of Nirvikalp Samadhi and this gives rise to a state of freedom from all bondages (Karmas) in the end. This Sadhana is known as “Bhedabheda Ratnatray” (i.e. the three jewels of distinction and non-distinction), and the concerned philosophy is known as “Sapeksh Darshan”, “Anekant Darshan” or “Relative Pluralism” in Jainism.

Thus we can understand that, this principle of relativity is extremely beneficial and useful, both in worldly dealings as also in the Sadhana of the Absolute. The aspirant can grasp it thoroughly

only through the preaching of an enlightened preceptor. He attains the experience of bliss in this life as also in the life hereafter, and in the end, attains the state of emancipation (liberation).

Glory of The Principle of Relativity

1. It is the precise discrimination that is propounded and eulogized in all schools of philosophy. Known as Syadvad, its masterly elucidation which easily explains the truth, is the principle of relativity.
2. The vision of relativity sets at rest the logical contradiction that is apparently seen between Absolute and Relative. This unique vision of “having many facets” (multi-dimensional vision, Anekant) brings all controversy to an end, and so judicious persons resort to it.
3. The vision of Relativity is the real one; vision of the Absolute alone is not valid. Only this vision of relativity leads to the success of all worldly (and spiritual) dealings.
4. Our salutations to the noble sages, who have provided the doctrine of Syadvad indicating that no doctrine is nullified. Let one who desires to resort to the path of the wise, become detached in the matter of various viewpoints, let him not be insistent that any doctrine alone is absolute truth. Let him not offend any living being by such insistence, let him not even desire to do so.

Living Examples of The Principle of Relativity

- (1) An aspirant once sought guidance from a sage (Acharya). The following was the conversation between them :

Aspirant said, “Well Sir ! Which is the best spiritual activity (Sadhana) for me ?”

Acharya said, “Some religious books be studied regularly.”

Aspirant said, “Should I also recite the Mantra of my God ?”

Acharya said, “Do that also, but your mind should concentrate

on the virtues of God and not on the God.”

Aspirant said, “On whom should I meditate ?”

Acharya said, “Meditate on any person of a good character who has knowledge of Soul.”

Aspirant said, “Are not religious activities and practices important ? It seems that you put most emphasis on the intention of the religious activity (Sadhana).”

Acharya said, “Both religious activities and the intention behind the activities are correlated. The purpose of spiritual Sadhana lies in not forgetting the aim, through constant awareness of Soul. If the aim will remain intact, practices will also progress properly.”

(2) In the year 1930, a Jain monk, Acharya Shantisagar was spending the four months of the rainy season at Lalitpur in Madhya Pradesh. The Acharya did not have conventional high school education. However, his intellect was shining through constant pondering over and study of what was heard from his preceptor (Guru), and deep concentration and repeated meditation on what was heard.

A renowned scholar (Pandit), Shree Devkinandan had come to Lalitpur at that time. He inquired of the Acharya, “Sir ! One question has been disturbing me for a long time. May I ask it with your kind permission ?”

After getting permission, he asked, “Religious scriptures have indicated that there are 8.4 million faults of human beings. How can a monk remember 8.4 million faults ? Without memorizing, how will their full observance be possible ?”

The Acharya replied, “Your inquiry is serious and important. Just as monks are asked to become dispassionate and detached towards all external objects, they are also asked constantly to meditate on their Soul. Thus when the Soul of the monk merges in meditation, the true monk automatically observes refrainment from 8.4 million faults. It is not necessary to keep a separate account of these.”

The religious book Niyamsar (Shlok 93) says, "A monk (Sadhu) gives up all faults as he merges himself in meditation." When the Pandit heard this reply he felt happy. He was fully convinced. This is the fruit of the unique method of knowledge which is relative.

- (3) Mahatma Kabir was a renowned saint, devotee, and great socio-religious reformer of the medieval age in India. He was one of the pioneers of the "Devotional Movement" of the middle ages. His personality was multifaceted. He influenced both the mass (ordinary people) and class (learned people) and has millions of devotees, dozens of institutes and huge spiritual literature at his credit which are all popular to this day.

Once, a person committed a great sin, and regretted it later. Friends advised him to see Saint Kabir and explain him the sin. Saint Kabir may ask him to undertake a penance for his sin.

When the man came to Kabir's house, he was not there. The man narrated his sin before Kabir's wife. She asked the man to recite the name of God three times in all concentration and devotion. This was a simple punishment but with this, the man cultivated devotion towards God.

Saint Kabir came to know of this and asked his wife, "Why did you ask him to utter God's name three times and not once?" His wife replied, "I asked him to utter God's name three times, so that he can remember God in three ways : via mind, speech and body." Hearing this, Saint Kabir was delighted and he complimented his wife.

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True Success in Life

In this world, there are persons of varied temperaments carrying on different types of activities. Human beings continue their life activities motivated by four fold inspirations (Purusharth); namely religion (Dharma), to earn for living (Artha), to have a family (Kama), and liberation (Moksha); in keeping with various factors like their capacity, circumstances, discipline, guidance, intuition, intellectual status, etc.

Ordinary And Moderate Success

The ordinary person of the world leads his

JIVAN NI SACHI SAFALTA

life, subjecting himself to birth, growth, continuation of the family, old age and death, the same way as an animal lives and ends its life. By following these stereotyped processes in life, one misses the golden opportunity to attain the eternal bliss and freedom, which is attainable only through human birth.

Some noble persons improve upon this conventional norm in that they do not think only of themselves, but they also care about how they can be useful and helpful in advancing the happiness and prosperity of other people. Being inspired by such a sublime motive, they make sincere efforts for progressive development with a view to really and successfully accomplish the goal of human life.

Thus they lead a simple, contented, meritorious, just and well-regulated life. They actively participate in noble tasks, charitable plans, and other similar humanitarian projects for the welfare of other human beings and animals.

If such persons intend to make their lives really successful, they should cultivate sense of subtle discrimination. For the cultivation of this sense of discrimination, the chief means is a well-planned association and affiliation with the noble, the wise and the spiritually enlightened ones. Today, such noble persons are rarely seen. This is indeed unfortunate.

Highest Success

A person who desires the bliss of Self-Realization, is really great. He desires nothing else. If he does desire anything, it is true happiness for all other living beings of the universe. Such bliss of the Self can be acquired only through Self-knowledge.

The basic means of acquiring this Self-knowledge is to be noble & virtuous and to listen attentively to the preachings of the enlightened saints. One should then make constant efforts to mold all the processes of one's routine life in such a way that a personality dawns in oneself which is divine, impressive, pleasant and self-sufficient. To accomplish success in this task is indeed the greatest heroic deed in this world. This is because one who accomplishes this heroic task, attains ultimately the supreme status. One becomes

a liberated soul, experiences infinite and supreme bliss and destroys all the bonds of birth and death.

Practice In Life For The Highest Success

Even though it is difficult to practice the path of such supreme success in our life, still when viewed from another angle, it is simple, straightforward and self-dependent in attainment. Great people, therefore have propounded that all individuals have the potential capacity to practice and accomplish it.

The means to accomplish the goal are knowledge, character and devotion. For developing pure character, one should make an effort to practice the different noble virtues described earlier. One should also remain vigilant and alert to see that one's righteous life does not get stigmatized by any blot.

Cultivation of right knowledge is essential for the acquisition of Self-knowledge. Any activity that leads to pride, idleness, ill-health and attachment need to be set aside by the aspirant with a strong will power to acquire Self-knowledge.

In the first stage of such advancement of knowledge, one should resort to frequent association with the noble people. Next, one should take the vow of individual self-study for a fixed-time, say from half an hour to three hours daily with a view to spiritual uplift. Let one read and ponder over, write and memorize the poetical or prose writings of the great Acharyas, depicting the moral laws, the lives of great people and the basic tenets of true religion.

This will lead to peace, enhanced power of understanding, moral excellence and a state of doubtlessness, leading to an all-round progress by leaps and bounds in the spiritual life of an aspirant. Along with this, one should also take the vow to worship God daily at a fixed time. When appropriately practiced, this will lead to intense love for the supreme virtues of God and of the noble preceptor. This will lead to the dawning of good virtues as are found in great noble people. This enhanced virtuosity is of fundamental importance in spiritual life.

The aspirant needs to become adventurous in his spiritual activity

(Sadhana) at this stage. Let his food and clothing be very simple. Let him cultivate a spirit of equanimity towards his relatives and friends even if they make fun of him. Let him keep his vow intact under all ordeals. Let him enthusiastically undertake noble acts of pilgrimage and charity, let him cultivate a taste for association with the wise & the noble and let him practice the spirit of tolerance.

He should spend his wealth for good causes, keep his mind engrossed in study, thinking, pondering. He should discard all interest in movies and dramas, political controversies, food and drinking, etc. This will slowly and steadily lead to self-awakening and the rise of a great spiritual personality. Such an aspirant fears none, refuses to be unduly influenced by anybody; he remains unaffected in the midst of all worldly attractions and becomes neither upset nor restless during times of physical ailments.

He is the uncrowned emperor of the world; he is constantly engrossed in knowledge and delight. His kingdom of the Self is entirely his, whether or not he is known to the world. Let us bow ourself with highest reverence at the lotus feet of such a highly enlightened aspirant.

Living Examples of Real Success In Life

- (1) One great man, Shri Raichandbhai, was born at Vavania near Morbi (Gujarat), about 150 years ago. Right from childhood, he was endowed with knowledge of previous births, a poetic faculty and exceptional memory. Yet he accepted Self-knowledge as the most important aim in life and acted up to it. Later on he became popularly known as Shrimad Rajchandra.

He was in the jewellery business in Bombay. He was a follower of truth and morals in business and passed most of his time in the study of religious scriptures, meditation on the Self and occasionally visited judicious personalities.

Gandhiji admired him and stated that, "his appearance was calm, there was detachment in all his activities. He never had attraction and attachment towards worldly prosperity. External showiness cannot make one ascetic. Detachment is the grace of the soul. The state

of detachment was most natural to him.

One, who desires to free oneself from Self-torture; one who is keen on knowing one's duty, will get many hints from Raichandbhai's writings. I (Gandhiji) have adopted lot of things from his life. Indeed my major source of practical spiritual knowledge has been his life. Let us learn at least four things from his life :

1. Engrossment in eternal object like Soul.
2. Simplicity in life and the same attitude to all in the world.
3. A life full of truth.
4. Nonviolence."

Shrimad Rajchandra adopted four Purusharth of life (viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) appropriately. He accepted attainment of Self- knowledge as the fundamental goal of life. He showed forth many virtues in life and he composed great spiritual literature. He has thus set a fine example for us. Let him inspire us, let us follow his path of Sadhana.

- (2) George Washington who was the first president of U.S.A., dedicated his life to his nation, first as a Commander-in-Chief of Army and then as a President. When he retired at his own wish, he lived a simple and peaceful life and worshipped God. Though as a part of his duty of a Chief Commander, he actively participated in different wars, he had no ill feeling in his heart for any human being. He was generous, humble, honest, a great lover of his nation and strong believer of God. He set an ideal example of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram (trio of truth-tranquility-beauty) for his fellow countrymen.
- (3) Mahatma Gandhiji was asked once during a meeting "What is the secret of your success and spirit in life ?"

He answered, "I lived my life so far on two fundamental principles viz truth and nonviolence. These helped me to achieve the following : pure heart and mind, calm nature, regular worshipping of God, asceticism, no drinking or smoking habits, pure vegetarianism, and love for all fellow human beings."

If we try to follow this kind of life, it will make our life peaceful and successful.

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Cycle of Worldly Existence

A life subject to ignorance and lack of self-control, becomes involved in the varied bonds of Karma. A person thus bound by Karmas has to take birth in four different states (destiny) and 8.4 million different existences (species).

Involving in the cycle of worldly lives implies undergoing obligatory worldly existences in which one has to suffer birth, old age and death as also mental and physical illnesses. The four-fold states are those of human, divine, animal and hellish life. The 8.4 million existences are described by the religious scriptures as follows :

SANSAR PARIBHRAMAN

Million

Nitya-Nigod (sub-micro)	0.7
Itar-Nigod (sub-micro)	0.7
Pruthvikay (Earth)	0.7
Jalkay (Water)	0.7
Agnikay (Fire)	0.7
Vayukay (Air)	0.7
Vanaspatikay (Vegetables)	1.0
Two senses (Insects)	0.2
Three senses (Insects)	0.2
Four senses (Insects)	0.2
Five senses (animals)	0.4
Heavenly	0.4
Hellish	0.4
Human	1.4
Total Million	8.4

**Pains And Sufferings of
The Animal And Human States**

Even today, the tortures of the animal and human states are visible to all of us. The domestic animals are dominated by bondage, it constitutes total dependence. The animal gets food and drink only if and when the master gives it. The quantity and quality of food also depend upon him. The animal gets nothing at its own will. The sorrow of dependence persists. Horses, donkeys, oxen, camels and other domestic animals have to become beasts of burden. They have to work heavily till they get exhausted. Their noses and mouths are pierced. They also have to suffer the blows of sticks and whips. Large number of animals are killed everyday in slaughter-houses, and others tortured for various types of biological experiments.

Other free animals and birds too have their sorrows and sufferings. Deers, rabbits, antelopes, jackals and similar animals

have the constant fear of lions, tigers, leopards and other enemies. Small birds and fish constantly fear their hunting by bigger birds, fish and hunters. The whole world of animals and birds is ever exposed to cold, heat, disease and other hardships. Though veterinary care has evolved in recent years proper diagnosis and management become available only at few places.

Tortures of Human Life

The fetus has to be hung in an upside down posture in the womb of the mother for more than nine months. Evidently, this seems quite painful. In infancy, the human being is totally dependent upon others. The infant cannot speak; it can express its hunger and thirst only through cries. It has to suffer the pain and illness due to lack of speech. It is entirely dependent upon others for eating, drinking, bathing and dressing.

In youth, senses grow strong and there is some self-dependence. However, diseases can attack at any time. One has to work hard for the family; one has to worry constantly about wealth, fame and achievement. Desires are many, but their fulfilment is limited. This leads to constant dissatisfaction and dejection.

Old age comes and the eyes and limbs grow weak. All senses become weak and the body stoops. The skin gets wrinkled and in extreme old age, there is total dependence and impairment of memory. Again diseases like tuberculosis (TB), asthma, leprosy, blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, peptic-ulcer and many others take their toll.

Some rare persons appear happy externally due to fruition of their previous good deeds. However their number is very small, and the real cause of happiness is merit earned by righteous deeds in previous births.

Pains And Sufferings of Hell And Heavenly States

The pains and sufferings of these two states are not visible to the human eyes. Let us however, describe these with the help of the knowledge of religious scriptures.

In the hellish state, there are constant acute sufferings. The souls (Jivs) there are constantly busy fighting among themselves, due to the memory of previous life, the instigation of lower gods and harsh tempers. They again unceasingly suffer from hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and other afflictions. There is nobody to help them, pacify them or console them. The Jivs of hell have to suffer through sheer helplessness and again these sufferings last for thousands of years due to the prolonged life.

In heavenly states, even though there are means of significant physical comforts; covetousness, passion and the like are common and so there is hatred, jealousy and other mental sufferings. The higher gods are blessed with self-knowledge. Their suffering is therefore relatively less. There is less anger and contentment is high. The passions are well subdued. Still however, dependence and sorrows do exist because of the absence of the natural happiness of the soul.

Once we thoroughly know the pains and sufferings of these four states, we get a proper perspective of the worldly existence; mundane transmigration really frightens us and a feeling of detachment is born. One feels an urgent need to get free from such feelings at the earliest possible time and thus is stimulated the desire for liberation.

Mundane Transmigration : A Great Distress

1. Birth, old age, decay, death - and the same again and again; all these are painful events. The ocean of such transmigration is full of pains and sufferings and is unfathomable. O Wise People ! Therefore awake from the sleep of delusion.
2. The religion of the detached ones is the supreme reality. Let it be steady in my mind, let it make my heart illuminated. Let me be free from the cycle of birth and death. O Soul ! Ponder a little more, give up idleness, awake and see that your invaluable birth as a human being is not wasted.
3. Due to failure to acquire dispassion, humility and the preachings of the enlightened ones, the soul has wandered hither and thither for long. What is past is past, let me now awaken myself,

make a sincere effort and be victorious.

4. O Soul, you suffered in all four states. Seek refuge in utter peace and tranquility by pondering on God the Supreme and Self-knowledge.

Living Example of Revolving In Worldly Life

- (1) This is an incident from the life of Shree Roop Goswami, the renowned pupil of Shree Chaitany Maha Prabhu of the 15th century. He was employed by the king Sultan Alauddin Shah of the Gauda State in Bengal as a chief advisor (Vazir). The Sultan was very happy with his service and he too worked faithfully for Sultan.

Once during a heavy rainy day, Roop Goswami was going to Sultan's office and he heard a conversation. A beggar was asked by his wife to go out for begging. The beggar replied, "On such a rainy day and adverse time, only a slave or servant will have to go out. Even dogs and jackals are not going out. Why should I go then ?"

These words reached the ears of Roop Goswami. He pondered over this a little, detachment dawned on him. He told himself, "I am trapped in ordinary prosperity and futile honors. I live a dependent life. I am born as a human being, and yet my life is in no way better than that of an animal. What a fool I am ! I have not even thought about real, eternal life, until now ! What will be my destiny if death entraps me just in this state ! I shall now pass the rest of my life in devotion to God and meditation on the Self !"

That very day, he submitted his resignation and engrossed himself in devotion of God the Supreme ! He thus attained the status of a great poet, philosopher, scholar and devotee.

Moderation In Food

Taking food in proportion to one's hunger or even a little less is regarded as moderation in food. Let us, from a practical point of view, accept that moderate food is the one which after consumption does not interfere with physical and mental work.

Philosophers and saints have unanimously accepted the close relation between moderation in food and spiritual life. Modern anatomy has also shown the close relation between the nervous system and the stomach.

Persons who have to take challenging and important decisions; who cannot take rest at noon; who have the responsibility to look after the efficient functioning of a whole department like directors and managers of large companies and banks, eminent doctors and surgeons, and others,

take only moderate food at noon. This is because experience has taught them that if they take a full lunch, their efficiency in work suffers. It is thus proved that the general alertness of the body, the state of the stomach and the process of thinking, pondering and giving important verdicts are closely inter-related. Simple, healthy food with less use of oil and spices, which can be easily digested, is ideal for the aspirant. Digestion of sweets and items with excessive oil or fat is difficult to digest and takes a longer time. These foods remain in the stomach for a prolonged period and make it heavy for several hours. Thus, generally speaking the activity of self-study and meditation cannot be undertaken satisfactorily after taking a heavy food.

For an average aspirant, simplicity in food will help in maintaining moderation in food. When food is very tasty, heavy and to one's liking, moderation in food is difficult to uphold and overeating is most likely to occur.

High protein cereals and lentils, rice, bread, vegetables, milk, curd, buttermilk, fruits, and similar items are healthy and nourishing. Being simple, these foods do not excite the tongue and being easy to digest, there is no heaviness of the stomach; the result being that no idleness is caused. Moderation in food can be well-maintained easily by such foods.

Excessive food spoils general health and creates difficulty in the observance of celibacy and other restraints. If one does not consume heavy indigestible foods, the practice of celibacy will be easy. Non-vegetarian food, onions, garlic, and unknown foods should be discarded outright by the aspirant, as they are not conducive to the peaceful life of spiritual Sadhana.

Glory of Moderation In Food

1. Regulated food habits are helpful in conquering the mind.
2. For a person, moderate in food, all sorrows are dispelled by the Sadhana of Yoga.
3. Moderate food is greatly beneficial in austerity, self-study,

meditation and other similar forms of Sadhana.

4. Having control over food, posture (Asan) and sleep and having acquired the knowledge of pure Soul from an enlightened preceptor, practice meditation on one's true Self.
5. One lives not to eat but eats to live.
6. Overeating is much more injurious to health than undereating.
7. Eating excessive food now and then indicates an animal instinct like that of a pig. A person of discrimination, who has a vision of spiritual activity in the life will surely not indulge in this animal instinct.

Living Examples of Moderate Food

- (1) Lord Curzon was then the Viceroy of India during the British rule. Sir Gurudas Banerjee was then a judge at the Calcutta High Court. Once Gurudas attended a meeting as a member of the Calcutta University Commission. He was returning in the Viceroy's special train. When the train reached Kanpur, the Viceroy called him to his own compartment for some discussion. Then it was time for lunch and he asked him to join for lunch.

He replied, "Usually I do not take food on a train. I take only water. I prepare my food after taking bath."

The Viceroy insisted for lunch, but Gurudas did not give in.

The Viceroy then declared, "The train will halt at Prayag station. You will then take your bath and prepare whatever food you desire. Only then will the train continue its journey."

This was done. Gurudas and his son prepared rice and curry and took their meal. Only then did the train start for Calcutta. In our modern society, there is lack of moderation in matters of food and drink. If we adopt habits of moderate and healthy food, our Sadhana will acquire momentum.

- (2) The Emperor of Iran, Bahaman once inquired of his physician,

“How much should be our daily intake of food ?”

“Twenty six tolas (about three quarter of pound).”

“So little ? How is this beneficial ?”

“You can live with this much food. The excess of food is an unnecessary burden on the body.”

Food taken in excess of the quantity that we can digest increases only fat. It cannot generate and enhance virility, delight and the span of life. Serious thought should be given to this topic in modern days. Scientifically also, moderation in food is advantageous, specially for those who are physically less active.

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Spirit of (Community) Welfare

We are all social beings. We live in a society and generally prefer to do so. Like us, all members of the society desire to have the facilities of life and peace of mind. The noble people live in the society only with the inspiring idea that all people in the society should have their due share of happiness and benefits. It is through them that the spirit of community welfare evolves in the society.

In the spiritual sphere, predominant importance must be given to individual development. Yet, it is the society that supplies most of the means for individual development. It is because of this that

SAMUH KALYAN NI BHAVNA

the stage of the householder (age 25 to 50 years) is said to be the backbone of all other stages (Ashram), and is praised in Indian culture. Many great persons like Rishabhdev, Rama, Krishna, and others lived in this stage and followed the true religion (Dharma), and later progressed to accept austerity, renunciation and self-control.

Food, clothing, housing, education and medical care are, in the normal course, the basic needs of the human being. If a society intends to live in peace, it should see to it that all members of the society have these basic needs fulfilled. Schemes of social welfare are undertaken in prosperous countries, with this purpose in view; other countries are also moving in this direction. The spirit of community welfare is thus firmly rooted in people's mind.

Philosophers in the Indian (Aryan) culture have conceived of a system that can help in the spiritual development of people in a two-fold way. Generally, the householder's stage dominates in community welfare, while in the case of the individual spiritual progress, the life of renunciation dominates. It may of course happen that an occasional householder may progress well under proper guidance. However, all great people have accepted the fact that the life of renunciation is much more beneficial for the higher stages of silence (Maun), solitude and meditation (Dhyan), which represent the climax of spiritual life.

Group spiritual activities include sermons, contact with the sages, praise of the holy, prolonged benediction, devotional songs, reading of scriptures, prayers, pilgrimages, and mass austerity. Mass preaching by great enlightened saints has immense emotional impact on Indian public which then becomes merged in chanting divine names, and experience the trickling of tears of joy, excitement, and like, which enhance their goodness and inspire us also.

Concentration is easy in emotional sermons, devotional songs and congregational prayers. During the occasion of mass vows and fasts we do get inspired to sublimate ourselves when we view some aspirants at higher stages of sublimation. This leads to interest and delight in religion and praise of God. Ultimately it leads to the

development of many qualities like fraternity, adoption of the virtues of others, humility and desire for virtuous deeds.

In this manner, the aspirant who has taken recourse to genuine congregational spiritual activity (Sadhana), progresses on his spiritual path, so that later on, he can take recourse to higher Sadhana at the individual level. The dominant traits of this Sadhana at the individual level are silence (Maun), meditation, reciting what is written, repeated remembrance of God, service to saints, giving up sensual pleasure and tasty food and so on. Individual development is thus a part of community welfare. Individual development positively leads to community welfare because the community consists of individuals.

Glory of Community Welfare

1. Selflessness is the basic test of religion (Dharma). Only a person who gives up selfish motives is a real spiritual person (aspirant) and is nearer to true spiritual development.
2. Any individual who keeps himself busy in benevolent and philanthropic works, sticks to truthfulness and honesty, proves himself sterling like gold and shines out victorious even if he has to pass through various ordeals during his spiritual activity.
3. Only the society that has woven ethical values into its life-work wins real happiness.

Living Examples of Community Welfare

- (1) In the year 1935, Shree Ravishankar Maharaj, a great sage, visited a village named Sunasar, in Mahesana district of state of Gujarat, India. In the village, the majority of the people were by cast Thakors. They lived their life on theft, looting and robbing. The sage decided to bring a reform in the village. He would sit at a public place (Choro) in the village and hear people talk. Slowly and steadily he cultivated trust and intimacy with them. He talked about the honest work for them to earn their livelihood.

The people asked, “What work would you give to us ?”

The sage replied, “It will be a hard labor.”

The people asked, "Where ? Is it possible here ?"

"Yes, the lake in our village needs to be dug deep. Daily wages will come from the Government. We shall clean the land around the lake and grow the vegetables and fruits. I shall get you the necessary equipments and fertilizer. We will build a school for the children who are now playing in the dust. They should learn to read and write."

Slowly and slowly the villagers got interested in his idea. They started working on lake. They gave up their bad habits of taking opium (drugs) and liquor. The village became normal. However, one robber, Sonia by name, would not yield. The Government had declared a reward for his arrest. The sage learnt that he was hiding in the ravines of the Pushpavati river nearby. One day in the early morning, at four O' clock, the sage decided to go out all alone to meet him.

When Sonia saw a man coming from a distance approaching him, he asked his companion Raghu, "Who is that fellow coming here to meet his death ?"

"Sir, it seems that the sage Ravishankar Maharaj, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi is coming to see you."

"Why ? Does he seek the reward from the Government by revealing my whereabouts ? Let him come, I shall see that he is dead!" The robber and his team became alert and stopped the sage on his way.

The sage said, "Well Sonia, why do you fight a small war with your own people ? Why not a big one ? Why not fight the British Government for our independence with Mahatma Gandhiji ?"

Sonia replied, "Yes sir, I too have heard this".

In this manner, the sage created an interest in the minds of the armed robbers in his talks, and slowly brought them to reform.

A few days later after this event, his companions were planning a big robbery. Sonia was sitting bewildered. He was telling himself,

“Only the white foreigners (Britishers) deserve to be looted. The sage and Mahatma Gandhiji are right. Why should I loot and kill my own people?”

He pondered and pondered over this.

His companions told him, “Come Sonia ! Let us go for robbery!”

Sonia replied, “From today our paths differ.”

He threw his weapons down. His inner Self had awakened. He took recourse at the feet of the sage Ravishankar Maharaj. There was no end to the joy of the villagers. The Government heaved a sigh of relief.

In the village now, there is no thief or armed robbers. There is no addiction to drugs or alcohol. Sonia gave a part of his land as a gift to the whole community for the Bhoodan movement of Shree Vinoba Bhave. One man’s firmness & sincerity and the spirit of community welfare brought about a revolution in the life of a criminal village.

- (2) Eugenie, the sister of the King of Sweden, kept the minimum of her ornaments to herself and sold the rest to build a public charitable hospital from that money. She then served the patients in the hospital herself and looked after its general administration.

Once, a patient was deeply moved on seeing the royal princess in the garb of a nurse. Tears rolled down his eyes. The princess saw this and reacted immediately in the following words, “Today I once more see my jewels and pearls in your eyes !”

Our cities have been industrialized now, and they have grown cosmopolitan. Many people have earned lot of wealth. If they think that they could give in charity a part of their wealth and associate themselves in activities of community welfare, the society will prosper and progress. From the spiritual point of view, they will be free from their debts to the society.

Self-Control

Background

Self-control may be defined as the discriminative restraint of the adverse inclinations of the senses and mind with a view to self-purification in life. Self-control dawns and blossoms gradually in life by rightly taking vows and religious observances. When it reaches perfection, one attains the status of God the Supreme.

Importance of Self-Control

The practice (Sadhana) of self-control is very useful in one's social as well as spiritual uplift. Certain fixed codes of discipline are unavoidable for persons who take up some noble deed as their goal in life. The best example of this in recent times is that of Mahatma Gandhi. In his life we could see restraint of a very high order, in matters

of taste, clothes, food, sleep and celibacy.

In the realm of spiritual Sadhana, observance of self-control is considered to be fundamental. It is said by great sages, “Righteousness is the foremost of the religions (Dharmas),” “Character is the prime religion (Dharma),” and so on. Abundant knowledge without proper righteousness, is known by sages as dry bookish knowledge in the realm of spiritual development.

Self-Control In Practical Life

The Sadhana of self-control can, in normal course, be divided into three stages :

1. In the first stage, all unjustifiable and antisocial activities will have to be renounced as a rule. In this renunciation are included particularly the avoidance of all forms of adultery and stealing of wealth of others. Indulgence in adultery is always indicative of an intensely lustful state; and this is not only against the rules of Dharma but also against the norms of society. Any physical relationship, except with one’s own spouse, on any pretense is a form of adultery. An aspirant must therefore, abandon it.

Renunciation of wealth of others is also equally important. This is because its acceptance destroys virtues like contentment, love of truth and simplicity, while it instigates vices like greed and jealousy. It also disturbs the spiritual activity of concentration of the mind. Thus desire for others’ wealth involves the aspirant in various sinful instincts and his Sadhana fails to progress. In the same way other major addictions like intentional violence, hunting, etc. should also be renounced.

2. In the second stage, voluntary limits are drawn even on justifiable methods of enjoyment. As a result of this, activities like non-violence, truth, non-stealing, chastity and limitation of one’s belongings dawn. Limits are placed on all types of day to day activities involving lack of self-control in business & domestic activities. The bonds of sinful acts get loosened

and virtues dawn in life.

Since there is more spare time available, the mind can be usefully occupied in peaceful Self-study, association with enlightened personalities and other auspicious activities. This slowly prepares the ground for the third stage of complete self-control.

With the progress of this Sadhana, the aspirant gets involved - directly or indirectly - in philanthropic activities of social and moral uplift such as the adoption of lofty ethical values in personal life, service to saints and the needy, organizing camps for spiritual training, holding study circles and imparting the divine knowledge. In addition, there may be active participation in public charitable and serviceable institutions, like libraries, dispensaries, hospitals, schools and colleges, as also mobile medical services for poor patients especially in rural areas.

3. The third and the last stage is dominated by self-dependence in life. Even benevolent activities decline and personal Sadhana in solitude dominates. This is because, in this stage, one has to attain the climax of individual spiritual development. Here, religious study, silence (Maun), thinking in seclusion, meditation, reciting of Mantras, pondering over detachment, reflection on subtle elements, writing, devotion to the Supreme and other auspicious activities dominate.

Strict discipline is visible in external conduct also. Voluntary limitation in food, movement, sleep and rest become apparent. Extreme simplicity, a vow of non-begging and other austerities take over in the aspirant's life. Gradually, this leads to the adoption of the great vows in life with resultant enhanced self-restraint. With all these, the aspirant soon becomes a great sage (Siddha Yogi), enjoys real bliss of the Self, having won a state of advanced equanimity.

This is precisely the great personality which is designated as the embodiment of liberation, a moving place of pilgrimage (Tirth) or "roaming Rama," by those who desire liberation. By their acquaintance, by their close association, by rendering all-round

services to them, by obedience to them, one attains true delight of the Self. Innumerable salutations at their lotus feet of such great sages and Acharyas.

Living Examples of Sadhana of Self-Control

(1) It was the year 1898, Shrimad Rajchandra was in the village Kavitha in the Charotar region of the state of Gujarat. During his stay he was engrossed in his spiritual progress (Soul-Sadhana).

Once monk Mohanlal asked, “My mind is wavering all the time. What should I do to bring it under control ?”

Shrimad replied, “Do not waste even a moment. Read some good book by which detachment is enriched, ponder over its contents. In its absence, recite the name of God. Give no leisure to the mind. Let it have the food of good thoughts so that all other thoughts stop working on it. Until you come to a stage of control of the mind, behave exactly the reverse of what your mind tells you, let the mind not carry you away at its will.”

(2) Sadhana does not bear fruit till one is firm in observance of vows. These two incidents from the life of sage Shree Ravishankar Maharaj indicate his firmness in observance of vows.

Ravishankar Maharaj was a great devotee of Mahatma Gandhi. He lived in Gujarat in the early part of the 20th century. He was a symbol of selfless service to humanity. He lived a long, simple, patriotic, philanthropic life. He is remembered with great devotion and respect.

Once during the hot summer, Maharaj was travelling through the Radhanpur area on his mission of service. In the desert area, the temperature was 120° F (49° C) degrees. He was accustomed not to wear shoes, and Radhanpur was about ten miles away. On his way he felt thirsty and saw a temple on the road-side. Maharaj entered the temple for a glass of water. The care taker (Mahant) of the temple knew Maharaj and was delighted to see him. He gave him water mixed with sugar. He tasted the water and asked the

Mahant, "Did you mix sugar with this water ?" "Yes sir."

Maharaj immediately got up and left. He did not want to break his vow of avoiding sugar in the water or other drinks. One hour later, when he reached the other town named Palanpur he drank water.

Once Maharaj took a vow of not to use vehicles for travelling for some time. During this it happened that he had to see one of his relatives. The distance was 30 miles (48 Kms) and the time at his disposal was 36 hours. He walked morning to evening and met the relative 30 miles away ! Progress in real Sadhana on the path of restraint is not possible without observance of vows undertaken.

(3) This incident happened approximately 175 years ago.

Jain Acharya Shree Ratnachandraji Maharaj was travelling through the villages around the cities Bikaner and Jodhpur (in Rajasthan) on his religious mission. Many devotees from the surrounding villages came for sermons, Satsang and Darshan. In the group of devotees there were women in large numbers. They were in beautiful clothes and ornaments. A devotee inquired of Acharya, "Does your mind waver on seeing so many beautiful women ?"

Maharaj replied, "Well brother, what are your feelings when your sisters and daughters approach you on the day of Rakshabandhan and tie a Rakhee around your arm? Do you experience any improper feelings?"

The questioner had no answer. Maharaj continued, "We look upon these women of the outside world as you look upon your own sisters and daughters. Again, there is no scope whatsoever for any improper feelings because of our study of the scriptures, the vows that we constantly remember and similar other practices."

"Woman's beauty is not the basic cause of the rise of perverse feelings, it is passions that take hold of the mind that bring about man's downfall. We constantly watch over them, we are ever alert." The questioner was satisfied and he bowed at the feet of Shree Ratnachandra Maharaj.

32

Delight In The Virtues

Gunapramod or delight over the virtues of others is defined as a state of experience of real joy and enthusiasm over virtues of other persons, which are better than one's own.

Many exceptionally talented personalities are seen in this world, in various spheres of activities. That is the reason why it is stated that “The earth is the mother that nourishes so many jewels known as great personalities.”

Several types of greatness and virtues can

GUNAPRAMOD

be visualized in the noble persons in the world, such as that of knowledge, self-restraint, devotion, meditation, charity, intelligence, adventure, patience, firm determination, tolerance, discipline, regularity, joyfulness, introversion, rationalism, vision of reality, specialized knowledge, simplicity, humility, self-surrender, a spirit of service etc. When one is overwhelmed with joy on finding such fine virtues manifested in day-to-day life and is induced to imbibe them, the virtue of delighting to see the virtuous is said to be present.

True recognition of any virtue is the first step in the process of acquiring that virtue in one's life, and close association with the persons who have cultivated the same is indeed the best means to truly recognize it. The aspirant should first observe the virtue and its impact on the daily life of the virtuous person, with an open mind. During this process, when he feels inclined for that virtue, he should then endeavor to cultivate the same in his life. Even though this is a long-term plan, it is going to be a sure success with sincere efforts and practice, genuine willingness, firm desire and constant endeavor.

A sincere spirit of constant effort speeds up considerably the dawning of the virtues in the first stage. An attraction for the virtue can be gradually developed by giving constant support to its practice, sincerely and repeatedly. Once the aptitude for the virtue has arisen, the process will crystalise in due course of time and can still be further enhanced by company of the judicious and virtuous.

Whenever we come across virtuous persons, we should really respect them by praising their virtues. We should encourage and appreciate them by writing to them if they live at a distance. We should especially honor them and encourage their pious deeds by rendering multifaceted and appropriate services, by reciting hymns in their praise & worship and by offering them a special reception and respect. In this manner, the aspirant gives a live expression to his internal delight about their virtues; and by imbibing & inheriting those virtues in his life, honors them in true spiritual form. Thus the aspirant is expected to adopt the program of delighting in the

virtues of others methodically by learning and practicing new virtues and reviving the old ones already acquired earlier. The aspirant, who follows this scrupulously himself becomes a great saint through the vast accumulation of many sublime virtues.

Living Example of Delight At Virtues

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a great torch-bearer of Indian culture died in 1883. Efforts were made therefore, by his devotees to prepare a fine biography of Swamiji. One devotee of Swamiji very humbly approached a great scholar disciple and said, “You are a great scholar, you know Swamiji’s doctrines so well. You are thoroughly acquainted with his life. Please write a biography of Swamiji. It will be a permanent memorial to Swamiji and will inspire future generations to a higher and nobler life.”

The scholar-disciple replied, “Well friend, the work has already begun and will end at the proper time.”

The devotee replied, “We are very grateful to you. Kindly set aside all other works and complete this work as early as possible.”

The scholar-disciple said, “Well brother, our viewpoints are diametrically opposed. The biography on Swamiji is a living one. I am writing it with every moment of my life by adopting his qualities. That is how I am writing his biography. For that itself, great effort, an awakened Self and renunciation are necessary. It would take a long time and I would not feel satisfied simply by writing about his life on paper. Just a parrot-like description of his virtues can surely not create a real memorial to Swamiji.”

At this time we should follow his principles and live our lives the way he did, and that way we will be able to continue his work

Glossary-1

Glossary of Words

Acharya - A chief monk among the Jain ascetics, usually a strict disciplinarian. He is supposed to have 36 qualities.

Agnikay - Minute form of life whose body is fire.

Ahinsadharmā - The religion of non-violence.

Anatma - Non-living being, non-Self.

Anekant - To know and present from some point of view.

Annas - Old coin of India, equal to $\frac{1}{16}$ th of a Rupee.

Anubhagbandh - The intensity of results of Karma.

Anupreksha - To reflect, to meditate.

Artha - To work for livelihood, meaning

Arya - Noble, one whose thoughts are pure.

Aryan - Belonging to Arya.

Asan - Physical Yoga (Posture). The third among

the eight-fold path of Yoga Sadhana.

Anashana - Fasting.

Ashram - An abode of peace and shelter, The four phases of life: celibate, householder, retired, and renounced.

Atma - soul, that element which keeps the body alive.

Atmajagruti - Vigilance of the soul.

Atma Gnan - Self-realization.

Atma Jyoti - The soul compared to a flame which lights itself as well as others.

Atma Sadhana - The various practices done for attaining Self-realization.

Bal-Brahmachari - A celibate, all through out his life.

Bhaji - Leafy vegetables.

Bhaktisutra - A high standard scripture written by Maharshi Narad on the subject of devotion (Bhakti).

Bhedabhed - Faceted knowledge to understand the nature of a substance from different points.

Bhoodan - Donating land to the landless, a socioeconomic movement advanced by Vinoba Bhave around 1950.

Brhamacharya - Celibacy.

Chapatris - A special type of round thin bread made from wheat.

Chariot - A special vehicle carried by two, four, or eight horses.

Charioteer - A person who drives a chariot.

Charya - The daily routine of various religious activities.

Chaturmas - The four months of the monsoon season during which Jain monks stay at one place.

Dacoit - An armed robber.

Dan - Charity, donation.

Darshan - To have a glimpse of a deity in a temple.

Daya - compassion, mercy.

Dhal - A shield made of iron to protect oneself during a fight of sharp weapons.

Dharma - Religion.

Dhyan - Meditation, attention.

Dhyey - Object of meditation, goal

- Digambar** - Sky-clad, naked Jain monk with total renunciation.
- Diwakar** - One of the names of the Sun, last name of a person.
- Dravyakarma** - Very small molecules of Karma, which are instrumental for transmigration of the soul.
- Dudhpak** - A delicious, sweet dish made from milk, rice, and sugar.
- Equanimous** - Highly blissful spiritual state of the aspirant, which is not disturbed by hunger, thirst, heat, cold, insult, praise, etc.
- Gatha** - A form of poetry of two lines, life narration, shlok
- Ghee** - A fatty liquid food made from butter (used in India).
- Gnan** - Knowledge.
- Gruhasth** - Householder.
- Gunpramod** - To delight in seeing the virtuous.
- Guru, Guruji, Gurudev** - A preceptor; one who shows the path of salvation or liberation by his life, work, and teachings.
- Gurukul** - Special place where a teacher teaches his disciples. A special Indian form of education.
- Hindu** - The main religion of Indian people. Their main scripture is Bhagawad Gita.
- Jai** - Be victory unto you.
- Jain** - An ancient religion of India, its present form was propounded by Lord Mahavir about 2500 years ago.
- Jainism** - Jain religion.
- Jinas** - Gods of the Jains, conquerors of inner enemies of anger, greed, etc.
- Jiv** - Soul.
- Jyoti** - The flame of a lamp, the soul is compared to a living Jyoti.
- Kalpavruksha** - Tree which satisfies one's wish.
- Kama** - Desire.
- Karmas** - Activity of body, mind and speech.
- Karmic** - Belonging to Karmas.
- Kevalagnan** - Omniscient knowledge.
- Kshama** - Forgiveness.
- Madhya** - In the center, central
- Maha** - The great, widespread.
- Mahant** - A saint who looks after the temple and its activities. A

great man.

Maharaj - King, cook, an adjective for saint.

Maharana - Great king.

Maitri - Friendship; friendly relations with all living beings.

Machado - A platform made at a height, often with a view of hunting.

Mantra - Holy words, given by a Guruji to his disciples for recitation.

Maun - Vow of silence.

Mitahar - Moderate diet.

Moh - To believe and act in such ways as are conducive to bondage.

Moksha - Freedom from worldly bondage, liberation.

Mudra - Posture, facial expression.

Muni - An ascetic who has renounced home and family and is engaged in the attainment of salvation on a full time basis.

Nad - Sound.

Nirgranth - Devoid of all bonds. A Jain monk.

Nirvikalp - A Yogic state in which all physical and mental activities are suspended and bliss of the soul is experienced.

Niyam - A vow for a limited period of time.

Niyamasar - A Jain religious scripture written by Kundkund Acharya.

Nritya - Dance.

Paduka - Footwear made of wood.

Pandit - A scholar.

Papad - A salty thin item of food.

Param - Great; highest.

Paramhans - An advanced sect among Hindu sadhus who are well respected. They often lose body consciousness.

Paribhraman - Worldly transmigration.

Paryushan - Holy 8 days during monsoon for Jains.

Pradesh - The space occupied by the smallest particle.

Pradeshbandh - The quantity of space occupied by Karmic bondage.

Prasad - Grace, some form of food given at the end of a religious function.

Pratikraman - A religious act in which sins are confessed. It is usually done in the morning and in the evening.

Pruthvikay - Minute form of life whose body is soil.

Punya - Virtuous acts.

Purusharth - The four-fold aims (Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha) of life.

Rakhee - A red thread tied by sisters to their brothers as a symbol of protection.

Raksha Bandhan - A special day of the year during which sisters tie a Rakhee to their brothers.

Rasparityag - A form of austerity in which certain tests in one's diet are omitted voluntarily. Third among the six external penance.

Rasawadajay - Conquering the sense of taste.

Ratna - Precious stone, jewel.

Rishi - A pious saint living in a lonely place who does penance, writes scriptures, and teaches philosophy and religion to disciples.

Rupees - Primary currency of India. One dollar = 68 Rupees approx.

Sachchidanand - The three main qualities of God : Immortality, True Knowledge, and True Bliss.

Aspirant - A person honestly trying for Self-realization.

Sadhana - The activities of an aspirant.

Sadhu - An ascetic in search of Self-realization who has renounced all worldly possessions and passions.

Sahanshilta - Endurance.

Sahitya - Literature.

Samadhi - Equanimity.

Samaj - Society.

Samarth - Able, strong enough.

Samta - A reposeful mental state.

Sangh - A group of people with similar beliefs and conduct (four-fold among Jains).

Sansar - The world, worldly life, and worldly transmigration, The world and its associates : birth, decay, death, and distress.

Sanskar - Imprints of previous lives and deeds.

Sanskrit - An ancient Indian language in which the Vedas, Ramayan, Mahabharat, and many other scriptures are written.

Sanyas - Renunciation.

Sanyasi - Monk.

Sapeksha - Relative.

Satsang - The company of the noble and wise.

Satyam - Truth.

Satyanishtha - He who is well-established in truth.

Savikalp - A type of meditation or Samadhi in which the activities of the conscious mind continues.

Shastra - Scripture.

Shastri - 1) One who is well-versed in scriptures. 2) A degree equivalent to a B.A. in Sanskrit. 3) A surname.

Shatak - A collection of one hundred verses.

Shivam - Prosperity, beautiful, final emancipation.

Shree - 1) Denotes respect. 2) Wealth.

Shrimad - 1) Denotes honor. 2) Wealthy; the wealth may be worldly or spiritual. 3) Rajchandraji's nick name

Siddha - One who has emancipated from worldly transmigration.

Sthirta - Steadiness, concentration of the mind.

Sthitpragna - A Self-realized person who has a pious and equanimous mind. A highly enlightened yogi.

Sudarshan - A special round heavenly weapon (small flat round plate) of Shri Krishna.

Somnum Bonum - The highest good (Latin).

Sundaram - Beautiful.

Swadhyay - The study of scriptures.

Swami - 1) Respectable adjective for saints. 2) Husband. 3) Owner.

Swas - Breath.

Syadvad - The method of presenting knowledge from a specific point of view.

Tandavnrutya - A frightening and forceful dance which Lord Shiva is supposed to undertake at the time of dissolution of the universe.

Tap - Austerity.

Tattva - One of the seven (or nine) substances or essential elements of the Jain religion.

Teukay - Minute form of life whose body is fire (Agnikay).

Tirth - A center of pilgrimage.

Tyag - Renunciation, to voluntarily give up.

Tyagavir - A hero in renunciation.

Unodari - To eat less than the appetite.

Upama - 1) Comparison. 2) A South Indian food dish.

Upkay - Minute form of life whose body is water.

Uttam - Best,

Uttar - Answer, North direction

Vada - 1) Chief. 2) A type of food. 3) A dialogue (vaad)

Vanaprasth - The third phase of life, from 50 to 75 years of age, when one gives up household work and renders socio-religious services.

Vanaspatikay - Minute form of life whose body is vegetation.

Vayukay - Minute form of life whose body is air.

Varni - An aspirant who has renounced his home and has taken a life-time vow of celibacy. He wears a special dress symbolizing his inner renunciation.

Vidya - Knowledge.

Vidyasagar - An ocean of knowledge, sometimes used as a proper noun.

Vikram Samvat - The Hindu calendar, about 56 years ahead of the western calendar. (A.D.)

Vrat - A vow, usually taken for spiritual welfare.

Yatra - A pilgrimage.

Yog Sadhana - One branch of spiritual path in which physical yoga and meditation are main activity.

Glossary-2

Glossary of Places

Ahmedabad - Main industrial city of state of Gujarat in western India.

Anand - An important town near the city of Baroda in the state of Gujarat, India. Anand is famous for its dairy, fertile land, and tobacco production.

Baroda - A cultural and educational city of the state of Gujarat, about 250 miles north of Bombay.

Banaras - The famous city of scholars (Pandits) where there are many schools for learning and teaching of Indian philosophy. It is in the eastern part of the state of Uttar Pradesh on the bank of the river Ganga, It is located about 350 miles northwest of Calcutta.

Bengal - A famous eastern state of India. Kolkata is the capital of the state (West Bengal).

Bikaner - A city located in the northern part of the state of Rajasthan.

Bombay - A very important industrial and financial city of India on its western coast located in the state of Maharashtra.

Bundelkhand - Located in the north eastern part of the state of Uttar Pradesh and adjoining districts of Madhya Pradesh in northern India. It is rich in Jain cultural heritage.

Calcutta - Capital of state of West Bengal and the largest city of India. (Now called Kolkata).

Cambay - A port and ancient city in the state of Gujarat, India.

Charotar - A district in the central part of Gujarat state which is very fertile and full of vegetation.

Datia - A small kingdom in north-central India.

Delhi - Capital of India. (New Delhi).

Gajapantha - A place of Jain pilgrimage, about 80 miles south of Bombay.

Gauda - A small state in old Bengal.

Gujarat - A state in western India.

Hoogli - The former name of a port in Calcutta where the river Ganges merges with the ocean called Bay of Bengal.

Jaipur - The capital of Rajasthan, also known as Pink City.

Jamalpur - An area in the city of Ahmedabad.

Jhansi - An important historical city famous for its fort, its large military base, and its freedom fighter Queen Laxmibai.

Jodhpur - A city in northern part of state of Rajasthan.

Kamarapuker - A village in Bengal.

Kanpur - An industrial city in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Karnatak - A state in southern India whose main cities are Bangalore and Mysore.

Kashi - Another name of Banaras.

Kavitha - A village in Gujarat about 40 miles south of Ahmedabad.

Khurai - A town in Madhya Pradesh near the border of Maharashtra State.

Krishnanagar - A district in the state of Bengal.

Lalitpur - A city in Madhya Pradesh about 150 miles northeast of Bhopal. It has a large Jain population and a Jain college.

- Mehsana** - A city in north Gujarat.
- Mahudi** - A popular place of pilgrimage in Gujarat near Mehsana.
- Morbi** - A city in Gujarat, about 140 miles from Ahmedabad.
Shrimad Rajchandra was born in a nearby village called Vavana.
- Mysore** - A city in Karnatak in south India, famous for its Vrindavan Garden.
- Nasik** - A place of pilgrimage about 100 miles from Bombay.
- Navadwip** - A town in Bihar associated with the life of the great sage Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
- Orissa** - A state in the eastern India.
- Palanpur** - A city in north Gujarat.
- Panna** - An old state in central India.
- Prayag** - A holy place for Hindus in Uttar Pradesh where three sacred rivers (Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati) meet.
- Punjab** - The northwestern state of India well known for fertile land and great warriors. The head quarters of the Sikh religion.
- Satara** - A districts as well as a city of Maharashtra, about 200 miles south of Bombay.
- Shahjahanpur** - A city in the state of Uttar Pradesh about 200 miles northwest from the famous city Lucknow.
- Shravanbelgola** - A famous ancient Jain pilgrimage center in south India, about 25 miles from Bangalore. There is a 57 feet high statue of Bahubali Bhagwan that was carved in 981 A.D.
- Sonagiri** - A Jain pilgrimage center near Jhansi in north India.
- Surat** - A city in south Gujarat about 120 miles south of Ahmedabad.
- Tankara** - The birth place of the great sage Swami Dayanand Saraswati near the city Morbi in the state of Gujarat.
- Thakores** - A sect of Rajput (Kshatriya or Warrior).
- Vavana** - A small village in Gujarat state about 60 miles from the Rajkot city, where Shrimad Rajchandra was born.

Glossary-3

Glossary of People

Allauddin - The great Muslim ruler of India who reigned from 1296 to 1316 A.D.

Bhamasha - A great Jain donor who liberally contributed his personal wealth during famine times, and to Maharana Pratap to fight Moguls.

Curzon - One of the British Viceroy of India.

Chaudharis - A sub-caste of Hindu Patels who are usually landlords and undertake farming on a large scale.

Devkinandan - A great Jain scholar and logician of the early part of 20th century from Karanja in south India.

Devkaranji - One of the seven ascetic disciples of Shrimad Rajchandra.

Gauda - A caste of Brahmins

Gautam - The first disciple of Bhagvan Mahavir.

Also, one of the names of Buddha.

Gazani - An invader and robber who made several invasions in north India between 999 and 1027 A.D.

Hanuman - The greatest disciple and devotee of Hindu Lord Rama who attained liberation (Nirvan) in the same life.

Hrishikesh - One of the names of Lord Krishna. Also a famous pilgrim city in Himalay on the river Ganga.

Jagdusha - A great Jain donor who liberally contributed from his personal wealth during famine times.

Jagtesh - The king of Jaipur in the latter part of the 18th century.

Karna - The famous donor and warrior in the Mahabharat. He was the eldest son of Kunti.

Khudiram - The father of the famous saint, Shri Ramkrishna Paramhans.

Krishna - An incarnation of Lord Vishnu who preached Gita in Mahabharat. One of the most popular deities in India.

Mahaprabhu - An honorable adjective used for the great saint, Chaitanya.

Mahavir - The 24th Tirthankar of the Jain religion who lived from 599 to 527 B.C. He was a prince who became a great religious leader, austere, revolutionary and attained liberation.

Mohammedan - The prophet who founded the Muslim religion.

Napolean - A great French conqueror and emperor.

Neminath - The 22nd Tirthankar of Jainism.

Panna - A famous faithful female servant of the state of Rajasthan.

Parshvanath - The 23rd Tirthankar of Jainism.

Pratap - The great king of Rajasthan who fought against the Mogul (Muslim) kings in the 15th century.

Raichandbhai - Earlier name of Shrimad Rajchandra.

Rama - An incarnation of Lord Vishnu who was the king of the city of Ayodhya. He is one of the most popular deities of India. His life- work is described in Ramayan.

Ramharshdasji - The present saint of the temple of Jagannath in Ahmedabad.

Raman Maharshi - A great saint of the 20th century who lived in

Tamil Nadu, south India.

Ramanand - Preceptor of Mahatma Kabir.

Saraswati - The Goddess of learning.

Shankaracharya - The great Vedic scholar of the 8th century who has to his credit, several authentic works on all aspects of Vedant.

Shibi - A great prehistorical king well known for his extreme generosity and yielding protection to those who took his shelter.

Shree - Wife of Lord Vishnu.

Shreyans - A prehistorical king who gave alms to the first Jain Tirthankar Rishabhdev after the latter had fasted for one year.

Sudarshan - A house-holder disciple of Bhagwan Mahavir, well-known for his vow of celibacy.

Vazir - A minister or chief administrator.

Vinoba Bhave - A great socio-religious and spiritual personality of the 20th century. He was like a Rishi (monk) of ancient times. He was also an associate of Mahatma Gandhi and has to his credit, several important books written on Indian culture, spiritualism, and Gita.

Yudhishthir - The eldest brother among the five Pandavs. A great pioneer of truth.

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• શાંતિપથ દર્શન ભાગ : 1-2	180.00
• સંતોની પદાવરણ ગંગા	30.00
• શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિશાસ્ત્ર (હસ્ત લિખિત)	5.00
• ભાવ પ્રતિકમાણ	10.00
• જિનેન્દ્ર-પૂજા	10.00
• સંત સૌરભ (દિવ્યધ્વનિ વિશેષાંક)	નિ:શુલ્ક
• પુષ્પમાળા	5.00
• Pushp Mala & Bodh Vachan	10.00
• કાર્યકર્તા-પાથેય (સેવા-ધર્મ)	5.00
• તીર્થ સૌરભ (રજત જયંતી વિશેષાંક)	નિ:શુલ્ક
• બૃહદ્ આલોચના (વિવેચન)	10.00
• દૈનિક ભક્તિક્રમ	40.00
• ભક્તિ પરાગ (ભજન સંગ્રહ)	40.00
• જિન અર્ચના (પ્રક્ષાલ, પૂજા, સ્તુતિ આદિ સંગ્રહ)	20.00
• શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિશાસ્ત્ર પૂજા-વિધાન	10.00
• દિવ્યધ્વનિ (આધ્યાત્મિક સંસ્કારપ્રેરક માસિક)	10.00

(લવાજમ : ત્રિવાર્ષિક રૂ. 400 / આજીવન રૂ. 2,000)

સંસ્થાના મુખ્ય ઉદ્દેશો

- ભારતીય સંસ્કૃતિના શાશ્વત સત્ય મૂલ્યોનું પ્રતિષ્ઠાપન, સંરક્ષણ અને સંવર્ધન.
- અધ્યાત્મશાસ્ત્રોનું અને અનેકાંતવિદ્યાનું અધ્યયન-અધ્યાપન-સંશોધન-અનુશીલન.
- ભક્તિમાર્ગની સાધના અને વિકાસ.
- સમર્પણયોગ અને આજ્ઞાપાલનની જિજ્ઞાસાવાળા વિશિષ્ટ સાધક - મુમુક્ષુઓનું આચારસંહિતામાં સ્થાપન.
- શિબિરો, તીર્થયાત્રાઓ, આધ્યાત્મિક સાહિત્ય પ્રકાશન, ઓડિયો-વિડિયો અને આધ્યાત્મિક મુખપત્ર 'દિવ્યધ્વનિ' દ્વારા ઉમદા સંસ્કારોનું સિંચન.

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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

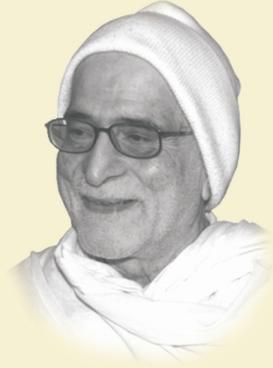


[1931 - 2019]

About the Author

"Born as Bal Mukund, and later graduating as Dr. Mukund Soneji, Puujashri Atmanandji renounced his medical career and worldly life after being deeply inspired by the teachings of Shrimad Rajchandra and Acharya Kundakunda Dev. His self-realisation in 1969 transformed him into a revered spiritual guide whose clarity, compassion, and scholarship shaped the Koba Ashram and touched seekers across India and abroad. His teachings, shaped by a practical and insightful combination of Gyan, Bhakti and Maitri, encouraged thousands to pursue inner purity and true Shrivak Dharma."

“ હું આત્મા છું.
આત્માને કોઈ શું,
કોઈને શિષ્ય છું.”
આત્માજી



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