

# ADHYĀTMA-JNĀN PRAVESHIKĀ

(FUNDAMENTALS OF SPIRITUALISM)

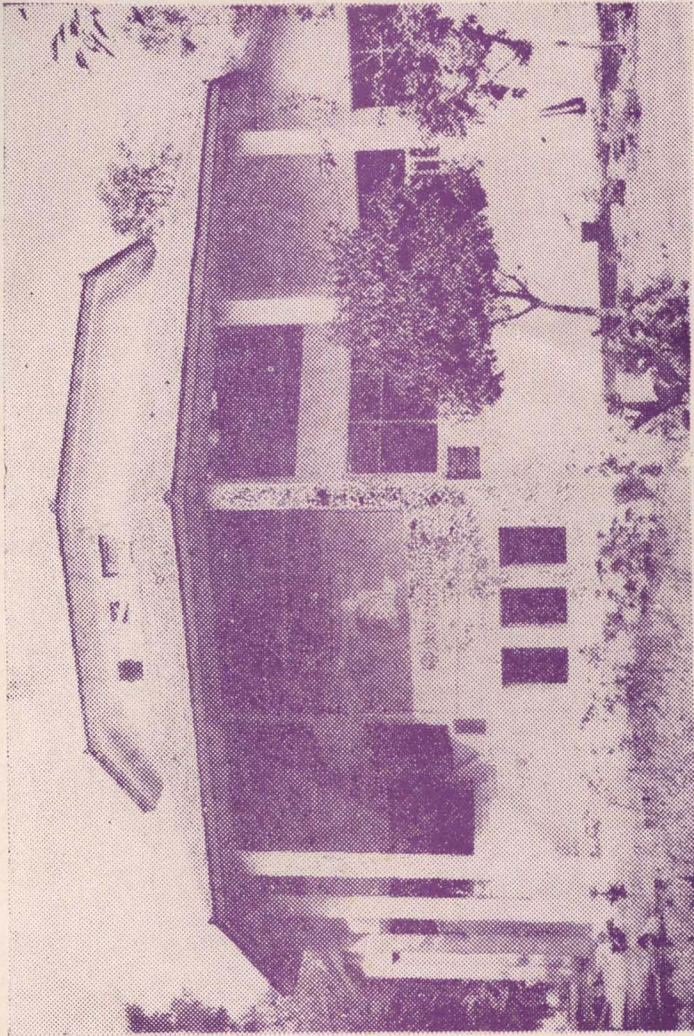
H. H. SHRI ATMANANDJI MAHARAJ



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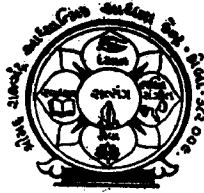


The "Vidya-Bhakti-Anand Dham" established at Koba (Gujarat-India) by the Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra (Meditation Centre)

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# FORWARD

Man has always been in search of eternal happiness. All great men of the world have confirmed that this can be accomplished only through Self-Realization. Self Realization in its turn can be acquired by a proper combination of company of holy-men, study of proper scriptures, non-attachment and noble conduct.

In this small booklet are compiled the main fundamentals of spiritual Knowledge. It is written in Question-Answer form for a lucid and logical exposition of the subject. It is meant to be useful to a beginner and a medium-grade seeker of truth. For further elucidation of the subject under review, a more knowledgeable and enlightened person should be consulted.

If the book serves its primary purpose of awakening the soul and bestow him with the basic spiritual tenets, he will be inspired for further reading with the result that he will engage himself in higher spiritual sadhana.

May the almighty bestow the seekers of truth with right faith, right knowledge and right conduct.

A fair deal of assistance and useful suggestions have been kindly rendered to us from Prof. Harishbhai Banker of surendranagar for which we are indeed grateful to him.

15-3-87

OM. ATMANAND

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# 1

## HUMAN LIFE

**Que. 1 : What is meant by span of Human Life ?**

**Ans. :** The Soul has been transmigrating in this universe since time infinite. When he dwells in the body of man having five senses and the mind, that particular period of life is called the span of Human Life.

**Que. 2 : Why do you call the human birth to be supreme ?**

**Ans. :** Human birth is considered to be supreme because the soul residing in human body has far greater opportunities for attaining true discriminative power than souls residing in all other bodies.

**Que. 3 : Is it possible for all human beings to attain to a state of beatitude ?**

**Ans. :** This may or may not be attained.

**Que. 4 : Which human beings acquire their beatitude ?**

**Ans. :** Only those human beings can attain the state of beatitude, who sincerely endeavour in the right way to know their True Self. This can be accomplished through the guidance

of right preceptor or through right scriptural knowledge; which usually lead to the attainment of Right conviction, Right knowledge and Right conduct.

**Que. 5 : Which human beings cannot acquire their beatitude ?**

**Ans. :** Those human beings who engage themselves in laziness, sleep, slandering or libelling others, violence and such other sinful activities and who cherish neither in the company of the nobles nor in good thoughts cannot acquire their beatitude.

**Que. 6 : What would be the fate of such human beings who do not strive for their beatitude ?**

**Ans. :** Those human beings, not striving for their beatitude, get awfully involved in various types of hardships and worries. They also become weary and restless on accounts of their passions and greed, to be eventually overpowered by the demon of death, who drags them to an ocean of miseries in the next life.

**Que. 7 : How can one be convinced regarding the rarity of human life.**

**Ans. :** The noble souls are easily convinced of this thought through the medium of scriptural knowledge and sermons of the enlightened saints. Furthermore, the number of human beings is extremely small as compared to the number of souls on low scale of evolution like the vegetation, the earthworms, the ants



and others. Thus, both the indirect and direct evidences assert the rarity of human life.

**Que. 8 : Why have the great ancient masters and saints considered the human birth more precious than even the precious-stone ('Ratna-chintamani') ?**

- Ans. : (1) In the general chronological evolution of the soul, nobody has made such strides as have been made by the man. This is directly evidenced by the modern progress in technology and various other fields.
- (2) The principle of the direct relationship between the cause and effect is well accepted in all fields of life. On the same basis, the human being with the accomplishments of his master mind and all the five senses as compared to a stationary, stale soul with low capacity must be the effect of intensified 'Punya.' (meritorious deeds)
- (3) Among all the living beings, only the man is capable of performing the highest task of attaining the salvation-a state of infinite knowledge and limitless bliss. Keeping in view the above ability of accomplishing the supreme task of emancipation, the human birth which is an external instrument in performing this task, should therefore, be inferentially

considered to be of the highest order.

**Que. 9 : What are the ways and means to really fulfil the mission of this sanctified human life ?**

Ans. : "Be good and Do good.' is in short the answer to your question. With a view to attaining the same, the enlightened saints have shown the following three major means :

- (A) The company of the noble.
- (B) Devout scriptural study.
- (C) Right code of conduct.

Practise all the above three. You may learn a lot more about these, when you closely associate yourself with a self-realized Soul.

## 2

### ATTAINMENT OF TRUE HAPPINESS

**Que. 1 : What is happiness ?**

**Ans. :** Conventionally, the common man believes himself to be happy when he experiences gratifying sensual pleasures.

**Que. 2 : Is this true happiness ?**

**Ans. :** No, not at all.

**Que. 3 : Why is it not true happiness ?**

**Ans. :** It is not true happiness, because it is short-lived as well as dependant on external objects. The association of the gratifying worldly objects is evanescent as it is the result of previous meritorious deeds. When these gratifying circumstances change for the worse, the worldly people feel sad and grief-stricken.

**Que. 4 : If somebody goes on perpetually getting the gratifying objects, is he really happy during that period ?**

**Ans. :** In reality, he is not happy because no sooner does he obtain the cherished objects than the craving for another object arises in his mind. In presence of such a perpetual desirous

state he continuously remains restless; and under these circumstances he can not experience the state of true happiness.

**Que. 5 : Even in this state of restlessness, we feel happy and not sad. Why is it so ?**

**Ans. :** One who has never seen gold will believe gold in the metals like brass etc. But brass remains brass and gold remains gold. In the same way, sensual happiness is sensual happiness and spiritual happiness is spiritual happiness. So long as spiritual happiness is not experienced, the wrong way of believing sensual happiness as real happiness cannot be got rid of and actions in its accordance will not cease. At the end, when this body and all the sense organs become weak and weary, it becomes difficult for one to get sensual happiness. Hence, at the time of old age and death all worldly people find themselves in deep girth of helplessness and utter sadness.

**Que. 6 : Then, what is true or real happiness ?**

**Ans. :** True or real happiness cannot be fully described in words. The true happiness is spiritual, super-sensuous, incomparable, unique, infinite, eternal and uninterrupted. This is the belief, experience and verdict of the wise.

**Que. 7 : What are the consequent advantages of such determination ?**

**Ans. :** Such determination infuses us with faith and strength to tread the path of eternal

bliss, and when pursued properly eventually leads to Emancipation.

**Que. 8 : How can we be really convinced regarding the true nature of happiness ?**

**Ans. :** The spiritual happiness starts with gradual development of various sublime virtues. It is a day-to-day experience that life remains full of peace and happiness in direct proportion to the extent of forgiveness, contentment, straightforwardness, truthfulness and similar other virtues. If you are not convinced about this fact, you may analyse your inner state during the period of anger and forgiveness. Tell us honestly, during which period do you feel happy, contented and blissful; the former of the latter ?

**Que. 9 : We do feel that forgiveness and allied virtues bestow true happiness. But is it practicable in the present times to really experience the spiritual joy as has been described in the scriptures ?**

**Ans. :** It is indeed possible even today to experience the spiritual joy to the extent to which one really endeavours for attaining it. This, we say, has been established by all the three media. i. e. the Scriptures, the Logic and the Self-Experience.

**Que. 10 What are the practical ways and means to attain the true happiness ?**

**Ans. :** The ways and means to attain the true happiness are stated in nut-shell as

follows :

- (a) Make genuine efforts in quest of a 'Sadguru' and closely associate yourself with him again and again.
- (b) When such a sublime association is not feasible, be in the company of the nobles. Study the scriptures attentively and have a true conviction of one's own self.
- (c) Be a true 'Mumukshu' (seeker of the truth) by cultivating peace, contentment, simplicity, humility, benevolence, non-violence and non-addiction in day-to-day life.
- (d) Having acquired 'true mumukshuta' (search for self) purify and concentrate your mind by repeated practice of remembering the sublime virtues, holy features and divine incidences of the Lord and the Preceptor.
- (e) Finally, practise again and again, the meditation of the absolute self, which is of the nature of unity, indivisibility, uniformity and of the nature of pure bliss and pure consciousness. Spiritual happiness can definitely and undoubtedly be attained by a combination of true conviction, constant practice, dispassion, association with the nobles and iron determination.

### 3

## A TRUE HOUSE-HOLDER

**Que. 1 : Who is a true house-holder ?**

**Ans. :** In general, a person who follows the path of 'truth' can be called a true house-holder.

**Que. 2 : What do you mean by a follower of 'truth' ?**

**Ans. :** Broadly speaking, he is considered the follower of 'truth',

- (a) Who follows truthfulness to the best of his abilities in all his financial transactions, vocal communications, and all other familial and social pursuits.
- (b) Who surrenders himself at the feet of the lord, the Preceptor and the Religion for his spiritual uplift.
- (c) Who really and ceaselessly pursues the path of self upliftment and self realisation.

**Que. 3 : How does he really co-ordinate the various activities of his life ?**

**Ans. :** Even though he synergistically combines all the four, life activities Viz, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, he maintains high

standards of honesty and justice in various aspects of his life, like earning livelihood, maintaining social and familial relations and all other similar activities. Resultantly, his life becomes pious and inspiring.

**Que. 4 : What are the various components of his daily religious practice ?**

Ans. : \* One and half hours' devotion or worship of the Lord.

\* One Hour's spiritual study.

\* 45 minutes meditation.

- All these holy acts he performs daily with concentration and enthusiasm. Appropriate donations on various occasions and association with the saints are also other regular features of his life.

**Que. 5 : What is his attitude towards domestic problems and methods of earning livelihood ?**

Ans. : He favours promotion of unity in the family. If somebody makes any mistake, his approach is one of affection, gentle rebuke and forgiveness. He makes his family members humble and polite by himself displaying the same. He takes care of cleanliness and health, maintains nobility and remains scrupulously dutiful. He endeavours to remain truthful in all his business and financial transactions, and always keeps up his promises. He encourages reading of good books and



learning of fine-arts. Guests are most welcome at his residence. Such noble house-holder attains peace, bliss and fame in this world; and high place in the life to come.

**Que. 6 : Describe the salient features of an enlightened householder's activities ?**

**Ans. :** A wise man's householdership is ornamented with following virtues. If the code of conduct does not conform the following features, he should be considered in a state of delusion.

- (a) Worship of Lord almighty.
- (b) Devotional attitudes towards the saints.
- (c) Affection & reverence for the virtuous.
- (d) Regular practice of generous donations for spiritual, literary and social-upliftment purposes.
- (e) Regular study of scriptures.
- (f) Firmness in the code of conduct.
- (g) Firm and resolute faith in religious undertakings.

**Que. 7 : What form of scientific (code of) conduct is seen in his life ?**

**Ans. :** (a) Five Anuvratas  
Three Gunavratas.  
Four Shikshavratas.

- These twelve vows observed by a house-holder are called Anuvratas (Partial vows).

- (b) There are eleven progressive vows (Pratimas) for the spiritual upliftment of a house-holder; which help him in controlling the senses and the mind and protect him further from violence.

**Que. 8 : What is the eventual result of the house-holder's Dharma ?**

**Ans. :** While Practising his spiritual sadhana as a house-holder, the aptitude for practising selfcontrol is enhanced enormously. He would like to accept the ascetic's vows (Mahavrata), and by such intensive sadhanas he would attain to complete emancipation in due course of time.

## 4

### CHARITY—DANA-DHARMA

**Que. 1 : What do you mean by charity ?**

**Ans. :** In the normal course, charity means giving away one's wealth etc. with the idea of co-operating with and consenting to any noble activity.

**Que. 2 : How does charity lead to our overall welfare ?**

**Ans. :** When the noble task of charity is implemented, one's greed declines, worthiness is enhanced, meritorious Karmas are accumulated and sadhakas are so benefited that they become carefree and make rapid progress in their spiritual Sadhana.

**Que. 3 : Does charity lead to social welfare ?**

**Ans. :** If charity is practised with discrimination and the amount well utilised, social uplift becomes possible indeed. The construction of public-welfare places like orphanages, women's welfare institutions, colleges, schools, hostels, hospitals, geriatric homes, libraries, town-halls, physical training

institutions, maternity homes etc. see the day of light and thus social welfare is achieved.

**Que. 4 : What are the main types of charity ?**

Ans. : Charity regarding food, medicines, residence, knowledge and security of life are the main types of charity.

**Que. 5 : What are the main qualities of a donor ?**

Ans. : These are mainly seven : faith, contentment, devotion, discrimination, lack of desire for reward, forgiveness and ability.

**Que. 6 : To whom should the charity be extended ?**

Ans. : Charity should mainly be extended to the worthy.

**Que. 7 : Who are the worthy ones ?**

Ans. : Those human beings who engage themselves in attaining knowledge and self-control are the most worthy.

**Que. 8 : How to implement the above charity ?**

Ans. : This is implemented with humility and intense devotion in the heart, mainly with a view to nurture knowledge and self-control.

**Que. 9 : If we don't get such worthy recipients, what should we do ?**

Ans. : Even if we don't get worthy recipients compassion-induced charity must be undertaken. To give alms to the hungry, the thirsty, the poor or those in severe distress from any cause is known as compassion-induced charity.

**Que. 10 Which is the highest form of charity ?**

**Ans. :** Charity of knowledge (Vidya-Dana) is the highest form of charity.

**Que. 11 Why do you say that it is the highest form of charity ?**

**Ans. :** All forms of charity produce satiety for a particular period of time, but if some-body succeeds in really receiving the charity of knowledge he can attain eternal happiness and his mundane transmigration ceases for ever. In view of its ability to confer a permanent effect, we call it the best.

**Que. 12 Who can really undertake the charity of knowledge ?**

**Ans. :** Such a sublime charity can only be performed by truly great spiritual masters endowed with self-realization.

**Que. 13 What is the glory of charity ?**

**Ans. :** This charity, when performed by the wise house-holder, leads to an increasing prosperity peace and eventually to emancipation; and hence is one of the most important and primary religious ceremony of all house-holders.

## THE ENLIGHTENED PRECEPTOR

**Que. 1 : What are the various types of preceptors ?**

**Ans. :** There are three main types :

- (a) He who himself crosses the ocean of mundane existence and also helps others in doing so. He is like a large log of wood.
- (b) The second type is like a paper i. e. those who do some meritorious work but can neither cross the ocean of mundane existence nor can do the same for others.
- (c) The third type is like a stone i. e. they themselves drown in the ocean of 'Samsara' and also drown others who take their shelter.

**Que. 2 : Who are the enlightened preceptors ?**

**Ans. :** Those great enlightened masters who have the real and allround ability to guide the seekers of truth on the path of salvation are true preceptors.

**Que. 3 : What are their main qualities ?**

- Ans. :** (1) self-realization.  
(2) equanimity.

- (3) They observe vows of restraining from sinful activities.
- (4) They inspire others on the path of salvation.
- (5) They have a truthful and masterly knowledge of scriptures.

**Que. 4 : Can we say that the preceptor and the saint are alike ?**

**Ans. :** Even though they have some similarity, the status of a preceptor is much higher. By acquiring self-knowledge alone, one can become a saint, but for becoming a true preceptor the above- mentioned qualities are required.

**Que. 5 : In absence of all the above virtues, can a person be called 'Guru' ?**

**Ans. :** The qualities mentioned above represent a great, enlightened master and a trendsetter whom we regard as the supreme Guru. If some of the above mentioned qualities are lacking, he may be regarded as a less enlightened Guru.

**Que. 6 : Is it possible to attain self-knowledge without having precepts from a Guru ?**

**Ans. :** Self-knowledge cannot be attained without obtaining precepts from a Guru. A special person with previous births' samsakars (impressions) may attain self-knowledge on his own but he also had acquired direct preachings from enlightened preceptors in his previous births.

**Que. 7 : How can a Guru be useful in attaining self-knowledge ?**

**Ans. : (a)** First of all, a Realized Guru has self-knowledge and therefore has personal know-how, regarding the path of salvation.

**(b)** Being a person with extraordinary exposition-power and all-round knowledge, he dispells the ignorance of the disciples by his experiential divine teachings, as the sun dispells the darkness, including the minutest doubts of the disciples.

**(c)** The divine personality of the great master is sublime and overwhelming indeed. Even when he is not giving the sermons his equanimity-charged facial expression, his spontaneous nature, his affectionate approach, his desirelessness, his natural ever-jolly nature, his incessant helping attitude, his strict self-discipline and ceaseless self-awakening--all these continuously inspire the disciples and the devotees to tread the path divine.

Thus, the preceptor is useful and benevolent to all his disciples in several ways. His benevolence is beyond all discription indeed. It is our humble request to the seekers of the truth to have a direct experience of the advantageous divine presence and



inspiring personality of the greatly Enlightened Master.

**Que. 8 :** If we don't get such a preceptor what should we do ?

**Ans. :** Ceaselessly keep up the search of Eternal Truth, always try to be in the company of the noble and regularly study the scriptural-truths while maintaining high standards of ethical code in personal life. Be in a close search of the preceptor during pilgrimage, because in present times, the Enlightened souls live in solitude and continue to tread the path further. If the search for the preceptor is really genuine one always finds such 'Guru' and the seeker of the truth succeeds in attaining the bliss of self - realization provided he ceaselessly strives to attain his goal.

**Que. 9 :** Justify the total devotion to 'Guru'.

**Ans. :** By performing the same, the disciple's attention remains engaged in sublime activities and expression of the 'Guru', he is overwhelmed by his super-human virtues and his indolence ceases. This gradually leads to rise of self-knowledge.

The worship of the 'Guru', thus being able to confer multiple advantages, should be scrupulously followed.

## 6

### STUDY OF SCRIPTURES

**Que. 1 : What do you mean by the divine scriptures ?**

**Ans. :** The literary works of the highly enlightened and pious souls are known as the divine scriptures. The source of the material of these scriptures originates from the omniscient Lords. However, the intents and contents of the great spiritual preceptors and other holy saints are similar to those of the Omniscient Lord. Therefore all of these can be considered as the Divine scriptures.

**Que. 2 : What do you really mean by genuine scriptural-study ?**

**Ans. :** The scriptures in which peaceful-attributes predominate, where the intended purpose of the study is peace and whose summum bonum is also peace-their study can be regarded as the real scriptural study.

**Que. 3 : Is the knowledge of the omniscient (all knowing) Lord and that of a spiritual guide equal ?**

**Ans. :** There is no difference in the quality of their knowledge; but there does exist a wide

difference in quantity. The knowledge of the spiritual guide is limited and 'indirect', whereas that of the supreme soul is unlimited and directly perceptible. However, both counsel for the same ultimate truth, the Reality of the soul and dispassion.

**Que. 4 : What types of scriptures should be well-studied ?**

- Ans. : (1) Those counselling for dispassion.  
 (2) Those counselling for detachment and Quiescence.  
 (3) Those devoid of sectarian disputes and dogmatic attitudes.  
 (4) Those depicting true nature of all the elements of the universe by both the direct and indirect methods.  
 (5) Those devoid of any kind of inconsistency by virtue of their being ornamented with Syadvada (Theory of Relativity)  
 (6) Those propounding pure self-knowledge and sublime conduct.  
 (7) Those pin-pointing the shortcomings of all grades of aspirants with clear instructions to rectify them in the process of self-purification.

**Que. 5 : How should we study the scriptures ?**

- Ans. : We should read them attentively and try to understand their contents. Where the meaning is not clear, a more knowledgeable

person should be approached for clarity and further understanding. The meaning grasped thereby should be pondered over again and again. The salient features should be noted. The scriptures should be recited and their meaning should be explained to the disciples systematically. The more important verses should be memorised.

**Que. 6 : Is it necessary to take the vow of scriptural study ?**

**Ans. :** Yes indeed. Methodical, regular and scrupulous study of the scriptures under the guidance of the preceptor or in association with other sadhakas is highly conducive to rapid spiritual growth. Random reading of few books here and there does not help us. On the other hand, all the basic elements of spiritual knowledge should be conceived well and firmly convicted. If this is accomplished, discriminating power arises in the sadhakas and self-Realization usually follows.

**Que. 7 : What can be the ultimate results of real scriptural study ?**

**Ans. :** The scriptures are our great shelter in absence of a spiritual guide and can enhance our spiritual development by leaps and bounds. In absence of the association of the noble (Sat-saṅge), intensive and regular scriptural study must be undertaken with a view to keep the mind engaged in spiritual pursuits.

Great indeed is the Glory of Divine scriptures ! They draw our attention to remote objects, annihilate all the doubts and reveal to us the real and the unknown elements. Furthermore, these scriptures are the direct sermons of the enlightened masters; hence they bestow us proper spiritual guidelines. Thus they are of supreme value in the path of Emancipation.

Conclusively, these scriptures must be regarded as unique and essential source of inspiration for all the seekers of truth, right from the beginner to those in their advanced stages of spiritual developments.

## REAL KNOWLEDGE AND REAL FAITH

**Que. 1 : What is true spiritual knowledge ?**

**Ans. :** When we know all the elements of the world in their original form and complexion our knowledge is said to be true spiritual knowledge. This knowledge should be in consonance with the Right faith.

**Que. 2 : We know Gold as Gold, iron as iron and so forth. In this case, is our knowledge Real ?**

**Ans. :** Here, our intention is to know the absolute truth. If the knowledge mentioned above is associated with attachment and defilement, it is unreal indeed. Without having the knowledge of the true self, all other forms of knowledge should be regarded as ignorance from absolute point of view.

**Que. 3 : Even the person with self-knowledge is seen to have some forms of likes and dislikes; under such circumstances is his knowledge real or otherwise ?**

**Ans. :** An Enlightened soul with self-knowledge cannot have such grades of attachment as

are found in an ignorant man. He has distinct and direct knowledge regarding the real and the unreal nature of all the elements in the world. The application of discriminative power between the Real and the Unreal shines distinctly in all walks of his life. In spite of this, lack of knowledge is said to prevail in his life in accordance to the degree of attachment. Both the above statements, though they look contradictory, are true in their relative sense.

**Que. 4 : What is real knowledge from spiritual view-point ? What are the real means to attain it ?**

**Ans. :** 'I am really distinct from this mortal body and my real nature is pure knowledge and bliss'. - if we obtain the above knowledge at the verbal, at the conceptual and at the experiential levels, we attain self-Realization. Thus a man with self-knowledge, discriminates between the real and unreal, the sensual and the supersensual, the mortal and the immortal and so forth. One should ceaselessly endeavour to discriminate the soul from the body like the sword from its scabbard, like the milk from the water and like the gold from the ore. The body-consciousness should be minimised and self-consciousness must be enhanced. Such continuous practice is highly conducive to spiritual advancement.

The knowledge which only understands the causes of bondage but does not withdraw at all from the same, should be regarded an ignorance only. All our reading, understanding and pondering bear their real fruits only if we try to remain indifferent towards wordly thoughts, wordly talks and vicious-mundane activities. This has been the verdict of the wise. Thus, the true knowledge of the self advances us on the path of self-purification.

**Que. 5 : On what criteria can we infer the presence of self- knowledge ?**

**Ans. :** When the extrovert thought-processes subdue, when real detachment dawns from all worldly objects, truth is realised in its real complexion. Thus, only when life shines by conglomeration of several sublime virtues that we can infer the presence of self-knowledge.



## 8

### GOOD CONDUCT

**Que. 1 : What is meant by good conduct ?**

**Ans. :** The general life-activities of a true gentleman may be regarded as good conduct. It is ornamented with plain living and high thinking.

**Que. 2 : Elaborate your statement by giving practical examples.**

**Ans. :** If there are gross vices in life, if there is liking for falsehood, if there are intentional sinful acts in life, if the sensual pleasures are craved for blindly and if injustice prevails in life, the exalted and blissful stage of self-realization can not be attained. Following are some of the important principles, working along which, one attains a high code of conduct.

- (1) Never involve yourself in an act committing breach of trust.
- (2) Don't make any false allegations against anybody.
- (3) Don't be a participant to malpractices in financial transactions. Avoid all

types of adulterations.

- (4) Never involve yourself in any act of intentional cheating (fraud).
- (5) Abstain from (a) gambling (b) nonvegetarian food (c) drinking alcohol (d) hunting (e) adultery (f) illicit relations with commercial women (g) partaking in the theft.
- (6) Be regular and honest in due payment of all types of Govt. taxes.

**Que. 3 : What are the advantages of good code of conduct ?**

**Ans. :** By following the above mentioned code of conduct, one's worthiness for spiritual sadhana is enhanced. If this conduct is complimented with precepts of an enlightened saint and followed up scrupulously, self-knowledge dawns.

**Que. 4 : Without such code of conduct which bestows worthiness, can't we attain to true Religion ?**

**Ans. :** In absence of worthiness, true religion can't be attained. This is the verdict of the wise.

**Que. 5 : What attitude is necessary in observing the above conduct for a wise house - holder ?**

**Ans. :** The above mentioned code of conduct must be regarded with great reverence by every seeker of truth in his day to day life. without which, listening to sermons etc. is useless. Scrupulous-truthfulness should be followed in all the processes required for earning

livelihood. While following these pursuits of good conduct, dispassion is really enhanced and it is only then that the aspirant understands the astonishing power, supreme glory and mystic fruits of the scrupulous obedience to the masters. All seekers of truth in the initial stages of spiritual development must follow the code of conduct. It is no use arguing that the process is a difficult one. Such an argument being illogical and harmful, should be shunned.

**Que. 6 : Describe briefly how can we keep to this code of conduct ?**

**Ans. :** Good manners, gentlemanliness, universal friendship, boldness, ceaseless devotion to sacred deeds—all these automatically lead to the code of conduct, which has been insisted upon by the great masters for all of us, who seek the path of eternal truth.

## AUSTERITY AND ITS PRACTICE

**Que. 1 : What is austerity ?**

Ans. : Austerity may be considered as control of desires.

**Que. 2 : Enumerate the types of austerities.**

Ans. : There are twelve types. Six of them are external and six are internal.

**Que. 3 : What are the external austerities ?**

Ans. : They are Upavas–fasting, Unodary–Reduced diet, Vritti– Parisamkhyana–Special restriction for begging food, Rasaparityaga–Giving up delicacies in diet, Viviktashayyasana– Lonely habitation, Kayaklesha– Self–imposed mortification of the body.

**Que. 4 : What are the internal austerities ?**

Ans. : They are :

- (1) Repentance,
- (2) Humility,
- (3) Service to the saints in normalcy & ill-health,
- (4) Scriptural studies,

- (5) Meditation,
- (6) Non-attachment.

**Que. 5 : Which austerity deserves special attention ?**

**Ans. :** All austerities are useful and beneficial, but in present times, special attention should be given to swadhyaya (scriptural studies); because its utility is maximum and the incidental distress minimum. By practising this austerity, the knowledge about the soul, the bondge, the path of salvation, emancipation, the edible and the non-edible, and the discrimination between the Real and the Unreal is doubtlessly accomplished. This in turn, makes the treading of the path easy.

In view of all these advantages, the ancient preceptors have considered this to be the best form of austerity for the present era and have recommended it for both, the householders and the ascetics.

**Que. 6 : Shoud we practise other forms of austerities ?**

**Ans. :** All asusterities are useful indeed. They should be practised as per one's ability. However, no energy should be spared in practising them. Among all austerities, the internal ones are more important, while the external ones enhance their value. The internal ones are directly related to the thought- process and hence are more useful in purification of the soul. Liberation is

directly related to this internal purification and not merely to the bodily attributes. Having acquired this wisdom, the wise sadhaka practises austerity in the real enlightened way.

**Que. 7 : What is the importance of austerity ?**

**Ans. :** Four types of disciplines have been described as the cause of salvation by the ancient spiritual preceptors. These are : Right faith, Right knowledge, Right conduct and Right austerity. It is by practising all these four together that emancipation can be attained and the transmigration put to an end. Thus, austerity is one of the important components of sadhana for attaining salvation.

**Que. 8 : What type of austerilty leads to beatitude of the soul ?**

**Ans. :** Austerity should be practised neither with wanton behaviour nor with ego, nor in accordance with people's saying. It should be performed purely with the intention of one's own purification.

In modern times, austerity is being practised as per people's verdict, or just traditionally or for name and fame or with a view to keeping some householders pleased. All these activities, including spiritual discourses, are not usually performed with noble view; hence are not conducive to the beatitude, but are seen serving the reverse effect.

All the religious ceremonies and scriptural studies should be carried out with only one aim. This aim is to remain in union with the divine and forget the mundane world. If this pursuit is followed scrupulously, one will automatically follow the path of truth and the same is disclosed to him by the Divine. If this aim is lost sight of, all the so-called spiritual practices like muttering, austerity, charity and even the yoga and meditation will fall flat in accomplishing the task of emancipation.

# 10

## ENLIGHTENED DEATH

**Que. 1 : What is an Enlightened death ?**

**Ans. :** This is the process of the divine departure of the Enlightened souls; so that when they transmigrate from here to their next abode, they uphold and carry with them their divine knowledge and bliss.

**Que. 2 : Who can accomplish this task ?**

**Ans. :** Only the Self-Realized souls can really accomplish this task.

**Que. 3 : When the average sadhaka departs from this body with Remembrance of God-(the Almighty), can we call it an enlightened death ?**

**Ans. :** No, we can't exactly call it so. He can be said to have a noble-death. (SugatiMarana). However by doing so, he does carry with him the embellishments of his sadhana. From absolute point of view, therefore, he can't be said to have a Real Enlightened Death, because he had not attained Self-Realization in his present birth.

**Que. 4 : What are the various types of Death ?**

**Ans. :** Seventeen main types have been described



in the ancient scriptures, only five of these will be considered here :

- (1) The Super-Super Death, attainable only by the omniscient souls.
- (2) The Super-Death, attainable by a Self-Realized soul with renunciation.
- (3) The Enlightened Death attainable by a Self-Realized soul who might not have had a renounced life.
- (4) A noble death, attainable by an average sadhaka who has faith in God, next-birth, spiritual-practices and virtuous acts, but who could not accomplish Self-Realization. It may also be attained by a person who follows the path or religious - practice as depicted by conventions, and possesses a pure intention.
- (5) **Mundane Death :**  
This is the death of a common man, devoid of any faith or practice regarding spiritual truths.

**Que. 5 :** When should one embark upon 'Sallekhana' (an Enlightened Death) ?

**Ans. :** 'Sallekhana' should be undertaken only during (1) incurable illness, (2) extreme old age, (3) famine, (4) Unsurmountable obstacles.

The principle followed here is that giving up one's body is far superior to giving up one's spiritual vows.

**Que. 6 : Briefly outline the procedure of an Enlightened Death ?**

- Ans. : (1) The person concerned has to curtail his attachments, subdue his desires and reduce his mortal-cage.
- (2) He generously donates for noble tasks, discriminatively gives specified amount to his relatives & friends.
- (3) He should give up all his belongings and purify his mind by really delinquenishing all his possessions, forgiving his kith and kin, and with a pure intention gives up all likes and dislikes for worldly objects.
- (4) If he can get the company of true saints, he may embark upon Mahavratas (an ascetic's vows) and then should stay in a lonesome place.
- (5) He should give up his food gradually, first solids, then semi-solids, then liquids and at last even water.
- (6) Near the end, he takes shelter at the feet of Gods & saints (Panch-Parmeshthi) and asks his relatives to recite divine sermons. With firmness, patience, perseverance and endurance, the great Hero gradually leaves his present lean mortal-frame and departs for his divine abode. The greater details of this subject should be obtained from the relevant scriptures.

**Que. 7 : What is the fruit of this Enlightened Death ?**

**Ans. :** The time of Death is the time of True Test for the Sadhaka. If such a death cannot be accomplished, sadhana may be considered fruitless from absolute point of view.

By carrying over the accomplished sadhana, he draws the beatitude quite near him and the mission of human-life is fulfilled indeed. It is therefore the duty of every sadhaka to make most sincere preparations for an Enlightened Death well-in-advance.

'Whatever religion you might be following, I have no bids for that. The only purport of saying is : Follow that devotion, that religion and that good conduct by which wordly filth is destroyed.'

**- Shrimad Rajchandra**

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