

APPORVA AVASAR

PREFACE

Apoorva Avasar is an immortal song relating to spiritual elevation. The exact date of its composition is not available. The first two editions of 'Shrimad Rajchandra' published by Param Shrut Prabhāvak Mandal did not say anything about the time of its composition. The edition published in 1946 by Shrimad's sister's son Hemchand Mehta mentioned that the poem was composed by Shrimad in the second month of Vikram Samvat 1952 (by the end of 1895) at Vavāniā while sitting on the sick bed of his mother. He seems to have mentioned that year through oversight, because the particulars of Shrimad's whereabouts indicate that he was not in Vavāniā during that year. He had actually been there the subsequent year in order to take care of his sick mother. As such, the poem could have been composed by the end of 1896 or beginning of 1897, i.e. a couple of months after composing Ātmasiddhishāstra.

The poem deals with the levels of spiritual elevation and the contemplation pertinent to those levels. If a spiritual aspirant resorts to the pursuit in accordance with that contemplation, he can make unmistakable progress on the path of spiritual elevation. This poem can thus function as a guide in the spiritual journey.

The poem presents the degree of detachment required in spiritual pursuit. Mahātmā Gandhi was much impressed by it and used to recite the same devotionally. . He even included 15 stanzas of the poem in Āshram Bhajanāvali. While writing in his autobiography about Shrimad he has mentioned that the latter was imbued with the level of detachment depicted in this poem

In view of the vital importance of the poem I had prepared its translation about 15 years back. It was, however, noticed that the contents of the poem needed detailed explanation, and preparing the same was delayed on different grounds. Eventually, last year I had to write about the poem in Jain Darshan in the form of articles. I have reedited those articles so as to prepare a compact treatise, and the same is presented herewith. I would consider my effort worthwhile, if this is found useful to the English speaking people

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APOORVA AVASAR, THE UNPRECEDENTED OCCASION

INTRODUCTORY

Apoorva Avasar is the poem dealing with the contemplation of a spiritual aspirant on the path of spiritual elevation. The stages on the path of spiritual pursuit are bound to differ from person to person. Generally, however, the elevation is treated as consisting of 14 stages, which can be termed as 14 rungs on the ladder of elevation. It would therefore be helpful to start this discussion with a brief description of those stages.

FIRST STAGE: This stage is known as Mithyātva or the stage of wrong faith. As the name suggests, it does not signify even the beginning of spiritual elevation. It is similar to a bottom floor, where a person might be looking for an elevator. Most of the people are at that stage. The life at the stage is rather instinctive, and the reactions to the situations arising from time to time occur more or less impulsively. There is hardly any sense of discrimination at that stage. One attaches utmost importance to his body and its comforts. The spiritual aspirant at the later part of this stage is, however, expected to have gained the yearning for religious life. For that purpose he seeks access to a spiritual guide. But he does not have the insight to recognize the true guide. As such, he may come under the influence of the wrong guides or teachers and would undertake the unbecoming rituals etc. at their behest. He would not mind even resorting to evil activities for the sake of his professed religion. He might also harbor dislike and disregard for the true faith.

SECOND STAGE: This stage is known as Sāsṡādan, which means the stage of retaining the taste. It is not a stage of elevation; it's the stage, where an aspirant comes down, if he somehow falls from the fourth or a higher stage. This is a transitory stage, from which the aspirant either falls down to the first stage or rises to the third one. Since he has experienced the taste of right perception at the fourth stage, he cannot forget it altogether. As such, he is bound to regain that perception sooner or later and resort to the path of elevation once again.

THIRD STAGE: This stage is known as Mishra (mixed), which denotes a mixture of the right and wrong perceptions. One at this stage is neither imbibed with exclusive Samyaktva (right perception) nor indulges exclusively in Mithyātva (wrong perception). It is the stage of rise from the second stage or fall from the fourth one. The aspirant at this stage does not have the discernment to differentiate the right from the wrong or the true from the false. He gropes in darkness and wavers between the right and the wrong. He might have overcome dislike for the true faith, but does not remain steady therein. He may practice the right rituals etc. but is not discriminate enough to recognize their purpose. As such, he may accept even the false beliefs as true ones.

FOURTH STAGE: This stage is known as Avirat Samyak (stage of right perception unaccompanied by restraints). This is the real stage of elevation, where only a few worldly souls arrive. Prior to attaining this stage one passes through two sub-stages known as Yathāpravrutṡikaran and Anivrutṡikaran. The former is still the state of right cum wrong perception, but with the potentialities to go ahead. Accordingly, if one makes right progress, he reaches the state of first Apoorvakaran (unprecedented). It is termed accordingly, because the aspirant had never gained it earlier. That enables him to proceed towards Anivrutṡikaran (no turning back). That represents the firmness to reach the fourth stage. So long as one does not reach it, he continues to strive and does not rest until he gains it.

When an aspirant reaches the fourth stage, he is free from the perception-deluding Karma. It means that he has gained the right perception. As such, he knows what is right and what is wrong. He is convinced that the soul is the enduring Self, while the body and all incidental situations are ephemeral and have been obtained as a consequence of the operative Karma. He knows the true nature of soul and might have glimpsed it at times. He has the right understanding of Karma and its bondage, and is keen to shake it off. He has brought under control Anantānubandhi (inordinately lasting) types of Kashāy (defiling instinct), but has not gained the vigor to control other types. As such, he cannot resort to a life of restraints, though he desires to adopt the same. He feels sad for the recurring birth and death, and aspires to proceed on the path of liberation. He might still get involved in the worldly activities, but he does not develop undue attachment for any of them.

FIFTH STAGE: This stage is known as Deshvīrati Samyag, (the stage of right perception accompanied by partial restraints). As the aspirant advances on the path of liberation, he starts loosening the bondage of character-related deluding Karma. He has now developed the vigor to overcome Apratyākhyānāvarāniya (coming in the way of adopting restraints) Kashāy and hence he adopts the laymen's restraints. His behavior thus remains partially restrained and he continues to strive for a fully restrained life.

SIXTH STAGE: This stage is known as Sarva Virati meaning the stage of full restraint. By continuing the endeavor to shake off the bondage, the aspirant reaches the sixth stage. His vigor is now in high gear. He therefore overcomes Pratyākhyānāvarāniya (coming in the way of totally restrained life) Kashāy. He can thus exercise control over all types of Kashāys (except subtle type known as Sanjwālan) as well as Nokashāys (semi-defilements). He also has gained the capability to give up worldly life and might even renounce it in order to remain free from worldly involvement. But he does not have the capacity to maintain total vigilance. As such, he may become subject to the minor pitfalls. That is due to Pramād (indolence) in which he is likely to indulge. This stage is therefore also known as Pramatta Virati Gunsthān (stage of restraint subject to indolence). The aspirants at this stage are considered competent to preach.

SEVENTH STAGE: This stage is known as Apramatta meaning the stage of no indolence. While trying to control indolence, the aspirant arrives at this stage. The subtle anger of Sanjwālan category now comes under control, but other subtle Kashāys may still continue to operate. Moreover, the aspirant is at times overcome with indolence and reverts to the 6th stage. As he becomes conscious of it, he tries to overcome

the indolence and gets back to the 7th stage. This movement to and from the 7th stage is likely to continue long. If the aspirant does not happen to fall further below, he eventually achieves irreversible control over indolence and reaches the next stage.

EIGHTH STAGE: This stage is known as second Apoorvakaran meaning the unprecedented stage. The path of liberation consists of right perception, right knowledge and right conduct. The right perception arises at the 4th stage and right knowledge is gained along with it. From the 5th stage onward the aspirant strives to gain control over the defilement so as to go in for observing the right conduct. By virtue of overcoming the indolence, he should have gained control over the instinct of anger by the end of 7th stage. During the 8th stage, he develops the capability to control other subtle defilements and semi-defilements, which he never did before. As such, this stage is termed as Apoorvakaran. It is hard to reach this level and only a few aspirants have attained it. The ascent from this stage is rather quick. The aspirant is now capable to go in for Shukladhyān, which is the superior level of meditation. Thereby he can rapidly rise to the next two stages.

The progress on the ladder had so far been partly by eliminating the delusion and partly by pacifying it. The route for advancing from this stage to the 10th stage is bifurcated. One is termed as Kshapak Shreni, which relates to making the progress by destroying the subtle defilement; the other is termed as Upasham Shreni, which relates to making the progress by pacification.

NINTH STAGE: This stage is known as Anivruttikaran (no turning back) or Anivrutti Bādar. The term Bādar means gross, but here it is used in the relative sense; the subtle defilement obtaining at this stage is gross as compared to the one in the next stage. At this stage, the aspirant gains control over very subtle forms of Mān (ego) as well as Māyā (deception) and also of certain semi-defilements. As such, he can stay above the subtle sexual instinct as well. The wholesome attachment, which can be termed as subtle greed (Lobh), still continues to operate at this stage.

TENTH STAGE: This stage is known as Sukshma Samparāy. Sukshma means very subtle and Samparāy indicates here a finer sense of Kashāy. As such, the aspirant at this stage reaches a very subtle state. This stage relates to overcoming of all the defiling instincts. The remaining semi-defilements and the subtle sense of Lobh come under control at this stage. At the end of this stage, the aspirants progressing by Upasham Shreni reach the 11th stage, while those progressing by Kshapak Shreni skip that stage and go to the 12th stage.

ELEVENTH STAGE: This stage is known as Upashānt Moh, meaning the stage where delusion remains pacified. The aspirant reaching this stage has thus pacified the defiling instincts, but has not destroyed the same. As such, he becomes subject to defilement and hence falls back. This happens due to loss of alertness and vigilance. If one does not regain enough vigilance, he can fall up to the lowest level. Such aspirants can of course rise again by regaining the vigilance and by progressively destroying the defilement.

TWELFTH STAGE: This stage is known as Kshin Moh, meaning the stage, where delusion is entirely destroyed. The aspirant reaching this stage has not therefore to revert to the lower stage. What is now required is to get rid of remaining Ghāti (defiling) Karmas pertaining to Darshanāvaraniya (perception obscuring), Jñānāvaraniya (enlightenment obscuring), and Antarāy (obstructing) categories. That is usually done in a short time. The aspirant then reaches the next stage.

THIRTEENTH STAGE: This stage is known as Sayogi Kevali, meaning the embodied omniscience. Since no defiling category of Karma survives at this stage, one attains the full enlightenment and becomes a Kevali (omniscient). Such omniscient Lords are known as Sayogi Kevalis, because they are still embodied. They are endowed with infinite perception, infinite enlightenment, infinite bliss and infinite vigor. These four aspects are known as Anant Chatushthay. Those at this stage are known as Arihants, whom we offer obeisance by the first line of Namokkār Mantra. They continue to remain embodied as long as Aghāti (non-defiling) Karmas, viz. Āushya (age span), Nām (physique determining), Gotra (status determining) and Vedaniya (situations conferring) stay. Being fully enlightened and devoid of any attachment, they do not incur new bondage. If Aghāti Karmas terminate simultaneously with Ghāti ones, the Arihant instantly leaves the embodiment and attains the stage of Siddha. Such Lords are known as Antahkrut Kevalis. The

rest of Kevalis may spend the remaining part of their lives in propounding the religious tenets, and at the end they attain the stage of Siddha, which is the state of liberation.

FOURTEENTH STAGE: This stage is known as Ayogi Kevali meaning the unembodied omniscience. The thirteen stages mentioned above are analogous to the rungs of a ladder. By climbing over it, one reaches the state liberation. That state is the destination, not a rung of the ladder. When a Sayogi Kevali (omniscient Lord at the 13th stage) realizes that the end of his life is near, he relinquishes his physical, vocal and mental faculties. Freed from those faculties, the soul rises up and reaches the top of cosmos known as Siddhashilā (abode of the liberated ones). There it stops, because there is no Dharmāstikāy (an ether-like substance, which serves as the medium for making movement) beyond that point. The rising process is very quick; it takes as little time as is required for uttering five short vowels. That period constitutes the 14th stage. Thereafter the liberated Lord stays in eternal bliss forever.

TRANSLATION AND EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

It was mentioned in the introduction that before reaching the fourth stage of right perception one has to pass through two sub-stages known as Yathāpravruttikaran and Anivruttikaran. The former is a state of right cum wrong perception with the potentialities to advance to the next sub-stage. Therefore, if one continually strives to go ahead, he reaches the stage of Anivruttikaran, which means the state of not turning back. That eventually leads to the rise of right perception, which occurs in the fourth stage. After reaching that stage one would aspire to further climb upon the ladder of elevation. Since Shrimad had gained right perception, he presents in this poem the contemplation relating to further spiritual elevation.

1) Apoorva Avasar Evo Kyāre Āvashe? Kyāre Thaishun Brāhyāntar Nirgranth Jo?
Sarva Sabandhanun Bandhan Tikshna Chhedine, Vicharashun Kav Mahatpurushane Panth Jo? Apoorva.

When shall that unprecedented occasion arise, when we get externally and internally unattached and by breaking the acute bondage of all connections, we may proceed on the path laid by the great men? When?

The spiritual pursuit mainly consists of the endeavor to overcome Mohaniya (deluding) Karma. That is of two categories, viz. perception-related and character-related. The former is overcome when one gains the right perception. At that stage the aspirant realizes the true nature of soul and knows how the worldly souls have been undergoing the cycle of birth and death under the impact of Karma. By that time one has brought under control Anantānubandhi Kashāys (infinitely lasting defiling instincts of anger, arrogance, deception and greed) that lead to acquiring of Karmas of very long duration, but he has not gained enough vigor to control other types. As such, he is not able to observe any restraint. With a view to rising further, he strives to bring the remaining types of Kashāy under control.

Shrimad had gained the right perception. As such, the contemplation here goes beyond the fourth stage. Since very few people go beyond that, he mentions it as unprecedented. His aspiration consists of becoming a Nirgranth so as to proceed on the path of liberation. Granthi means a knot or entanglement. Therefore the term Nirgranth means disentangled. In other words, it denotes the state of no attachment. On that account Lord Mahavir was mentioned as Nirgranth in the contemporary literature. Thereafter the term came to be associated with those, who do not have any physical possession. Since Jain monks and nuns stay without any possession, and since the term Jain was not in use for a couple of centuries after the Lord's passing away, those monks and nuns were known as Nirgranthas.

Shrimad here contemplates about being freed from the external as well as internal possessions. The external possessions consist of the tangible objects. Traditionally they are considered of the following ten types, viz. land, building, gold, silver, cattle, grains, male servants, female servants, clothes and utensils. Accumulation of grains and ownership over male or female servants are not prevalent at present, but their place has been taken over by automobiles, furniture, freeze, air conditioners, TV, DVD, camera, appliances etc. Moreover, there is a growing craze for the tasty foods and drinks. We conceive of happiness in the

form of comforts, amenities and tastes, and avail of the facilities, which are made available with the advancement of science. Instead of laying limits on the possessions, we have been trying to procure more of them.

We are now so accustomed to a comfortable life that we can hardly think of dispensing with any amenity. The concept of giving up the comfortable life may therefore seem unacceptable. If, however, one thinks at depth, he can make out that possession is not the source of happiness. Happiness lies within and no external factor can make us happy or unhappy. Desire is the root cause of unhappiness and that being insatiable, no amount of possession can satisfy it. The only way is to remain contented with what one gets at ease and not to hanker for more. It is the sense of possession and the desire for more that keeps us bound to the worldly life. The seers have consistently observed that possession constitutes a barrier in undertaking the spiritual pursuit. As such, every spiritual aspirant needs to give up attachment for the worldly amenities and stay satisfied with a simple mode of life.

The internal possessions mainly consist of indulgence in defiling instincts. Traditionally they are specified of the following fourteen types, viz. wrong perception, craving, aversion, anger, arrogance, deception, greed, affection, disaffection, undue laughter, mourning, fright, despise and sexual impulse. They hurt the soul more than the external ones. As such, the spiritual pursuit mainly consists of the endeavor to control those instincts. One can be considered a Nirgranth only when he fully overcomes them.

After becoming a Nirgranth one has to proceed on the path treaded by Lord Tirthankars and other great men. That is the path of liberation. For that purpose one needs to be free from all the worldly connections. Attachment and concern for the body, relatives etc. are the principal factors that lead to the worldly connections. All those connections are essentially ephemeral and do not stay forever. Even the life-long connections have to be given up at the time of death. One therefore needs to realize their ephemeral nature and to give up attachment for them. One thus needs to stay away from every type of worldly connection.

2) Sarva Bhāvathi Audāsinyavrutti Kari, Mātra Deh Te Sanyamhetu Hoy Jo;
Anyā Kārane Anyā Kashun Kalpe Nahin, Dehe Pan Kinchit Moorchchhā Nav Joy Jo. Apoorva.

By adopting an objective attitude towards all the situations, we may be holding the body only for the sake of restraint without the slightest attachment for it and aspire for nothing else on any other account. When?

All types of attitudes and inclinations, good as well as bad, lead to bondage; good ones lead to the bondage of wholesome Karma and bad ones to that of unwholesome Karma. A spiritual aspirant knows that all of them need to be avoided. As such, he would not long for any particular situation. By virtue of the previous Karma, one is going to get situations like a strong and healthy or a weak and ailing body, the respectable or disrespectful family, amicable or quarrelsome spouse, bright or dumb children etc. The spiritual aspirant would not develop attachment or resentment for them. In other words, he would not feel elated in favorable circumstances nor feel depressed in unfavorable ones.

Embodiment occurs on account of Karma. The worldly soul has obtained different types of bodies from time to time. Getting a human body is very rare and is obtained as the consequence of much wholesome Karma. Since we have obtained it, we should make use of it for pursuing the objective of liberation. Otherwise, we are going to drift in the unfathomable ocean of birth and death. The human life is valuable particularly because of Vivek (discernment) associated with it. If we do not exercise Vivek and lead an unconcerned, impulsive life, we would be wasting the precious life. It is therefore necessary to make the right use of the body.

The spiritual pursuit has to be undertaken while being in the body. Making right use of the body therefore involves taking reasonable care of it. If one is afflicted with a disease or is otherwise infirm, his mind would most probably remain engrossed with the idea of pain and misery associated with that. As such, it would be hard for him to think of spiritual pursuit. It is therefore helpful to keep the body in a reasonably fit condition so as to enable us to undertake spiritual pursuit. That does not mean that one should pamper it or develop undue attachment for it. It should be made use of for realizing the soul.

The endeavor in that direction constitutes the true restraint, which can lead towards liberation. This stanza therefore urges to make use of the body for observing that type of restraint. That is the real purpose of the human life. One should keep that objective in mind and use the body only for that purpose. In order to emphasize the exclusiveness of such endeavor, Shrimad specifically stipulates here not to have desire for anything else on any other account. The sole objective should be to gain liberation.

The term Audāsīnya used in this stanza is the same as Udāsinatā, which normally occurs in spiritual context. It has nothing to do with the sense of sadness or gloominess usually associated with the term. Udāsinatā is derived from Ut meaning upward, and Ās meaning sitting. The term therefore denotes staying above all considerations. It conveys maintaining of an objective attitude under all the circumstances. Shrimad has said in Vachanāmṛut No. 77, ‘Sukhaki Saheli He Akeli Udāsinatā; Adhyātmani Janani Te Udāsinatā’. It means that objective attitude is the only companion of happiness and it is the mother of spiritualism

If one seriously thinks, he can make out that different situations arise from time to time and they disappear in due course. None of them stays forever. As such, why should anyone react to it with the sense of craving or aversion? He should better stay above the same and observe equanimity in all the circumstances. Since equanimity is always blissful, staying above all the worldly aspects is the true source of happiness. That itself is the objective of spiritual pursuit. It is therefore hardly an exaggeration to state that objectivity is the mother of spiritualism. It is incumbent upon every spiritual aspirant to develop objectivity.

3) Darshanmoh Vyatit Thai Oopajyo Bodh Je, Deh Bhinna Keval Chaitanyanun Jnān Jo;
Tethi Prakshin Chāritramoh Vilokiye, Varte Evun Shuddhaswaroopanun Dhyān Jo. Apoorva.

By virtue of enlightenment arising with the destruction of deluding perception, we may stay aware of pure consciousness as distinct from the body and may witness the diminishing delusive activity on account of the prevailing awareness of pure Self.

When?

Ignorance of the true self and indulgence in attachment or resentment are the main causes that lead to the worldly life. Ignorance leads to perception-related delusion and indulgence to character-related one. The first step in spiritual pursuit consists of overcoming the former. The ignorance of Self, prevailing since the time immemorial, has to be removed. During the innumerable lives that the worldly soul has gone through, it might have resorted to different types of ritual and might have gained different levels of knowledge. Obviously, that has not taken him anywhere closer to ending the cycle of birth and death. That is due to the fact that the worldly soul has continually remained in delusion about its true self and that itself constitutes the ignorance. There is no possibility for the worldly cycle to come to the end so long as the ignorance is not overcome. The main thrust of spiritual pursuit should therefore be on overcoming it so as to realize the truth. Since that cannot be realized by one’s own indulgence, he has to learn it from an enlightened person.

Most of the people believe that observance of austerities and other restraints, going to temple, reciting prayers etc. would result in eradication of the unwholesome Karma and would lead them to the Karmaless state. It may be possible to earn wholesome Karma and to mitigate the impact of unwholesome one by resorting to such rituals, but that cannot lead to the Karmaless state. Lifeless observance of no ritual can lead to that state. As a matter of fact, no activity without internal bearing can lead to it.

The people, devoid of internal discrimination, thus stay deluded. They do not realize that during the infinite period of wandering, they might have performed rituals and observed austerities countless number of times. That has not brought the lasting happiness, nor has it led them on the path of liberation. They are therefore naive to believe that observance of any ritual without an eye towards its purpose can be helpful. The rituals are meant for cultivating detachment and for augmenting the sense of devotion. Their ultimate purpose is to gain equanimity. If that purpose is not served, mere observance of rituals cannot lead to the liberation.

The primary concern of a spiritual aspirant should therefore be to look for a true Guide and serve at his feet in order to learn the truth. That is the way to overcome ignorance; the right perception arises in its wake. One would then realize that he is the soul, different and distinct from the body. As such, he would not remain much inclined towards physical concerns or other worldly aspects. Earlier he was moving, eating,

toiling and undertaking different activities for the sake of body. That would now change. The character-related delusion, which used to prompt him towards wrong activities, now loses its strength. The very backbone of that Karma is broken. That is the way to overcome it. If one is serious in his endeavor, he can notice that by virtue of right perception the character-related delusion is continually losing ground.

4) Ätmasthiratā Tran Sankshipta Yogani, Mukhyapane To Varte Dehparyant Jo;
Ghor Parishah Ke Upasarga Bhaye Kari, Ävi Shake Nahin Te Sthiratāno Ant Jo. Apoorva.

Reducing the mental, verbal and physical activities to the minimal level, we may maintain self-awareness during the remaining life and not lose it even in times of great distress or infliction of terrible pain. When?

This stanza relates to the contemplation about remaining continuously aware of the Self. For that purpose, one needs to restrain his physical, vocal and mental faculties from undue indulgence. The mental restraint is known as Manogupti, vocal as Vachangupti and physical as Käygupti. The worldly life mainly consists of indulgence in defilement and that leads to undue exercising of those faculties. The spiritual aspirant needs to restrain them from undue indulgence. That is termed as Gupti, which can enable one to stay tuned to soul.

While remaining so tuned, he may come across different types of hardships and distress, which are known as Parishah and Upasarga. The seers have described 22 types of hardships like heat, cold, hunger, thirst etc. The spiritual aspirant should face them without being perturbed. It may be relatively easy to do so in healthy and favorable circumstances. In adverse ones, however, one may be concerned about the problems that he has to face. As such, it might be tough to remain tuned to soul. Here, the aspirant therefore longs to stay so tuned that his self-awareness is not disturbed, even if he comes across horrible distress or pain.

While discussing the 3rd stanza it was mentioned that ignorance of the Self is the primary cause of worldly life. Because of that ignorance, the cycle of birth and death has been running uninterrupted despite various religious activities that the worldly soul might have undertaken so far. During the innumerable lives that we have gone through, we might have adopted religious mode of life on many occasions. As such, we might have gained varying levels of knowledge and might have resorted to various types of rituals. Many a time we might also have renounced the worldly life. Since the worldly cycle is still continuing unabated, we need to consider why all those religious activities have failed in taking us towards liberation.

The path of liberation consists of right perception, right knowledge and right action. Since perception and knowledge go hand in hand, it can also be said that the path consists of knowledge and action. Therefore it is said, 'Jñānakriyābhyām Mokshah'. It means that liberation can be attained by knowledge cum action. The knowledge bereft of action is sterile. It leads nowhere and tends to give rise to vanity; while action without knowledge leads to a blind alley.

Most of the aspirants do not realize the importance of pursuing both those aspects simultaneously. Some of them hold that observation of auspicious rituals is enough. Thereby they expect to earn wholesome Karma, which can lead to a better life hereafter. They consider the path of knowledge slippery and hazardous. They see too many pitfalls on that path. As such, they turn their back against that path and devote their energy in observing various rituals without understanding their purpose.

On the other hand, there are people, who come across the spiritual books dealing with absolute point of view. Thereby they conclude that the soul being intangible, it cannot be defiled; it is incorruptible and stays pure forever. That is exactly the theory of Vedānt. It states that soul can never be polluted. It always stays pure and does not incur bondage. Hence, nothing has to be done except recognizing the pure nature of soul.

One should therefore stay away from being bare knowledgeable as well as from observing lifeless rituals. He should seek a right Guru and surrender at his feet. Thereby the delusion about the Self is removed and one reaches the state of enlightenment. The character-related delusion is not necessarily overcome that time, but the aspirant remains conscious to overcome it and to stay tuned to the soul. His longing in that respect is presented in the next stanza.

5) Sanyamanā Hetuthi Yogapravartanā, Swaroopalaxe Jin Ājnā Ādhin Jo;
Te Pan Kshan Kshan Ghatati Jāti Sthitimān, Ante Thāye Nijswaroopamān Leen Jo. Apoorva.

Subjecting all the activities to restraint and continually reducing their scope in line with the precepts of omniscient Lords, we may stay soul-oriented and ultimately get absorbed within the Self. When?

The aspirant longs to observe Gupties and to remain tuned to soul, but he knows that he cannot completely abstain from exercising his faculties. He has to undertake the essential activities. He has to eat, take water, go to bed, procure the articles required for survival, dispose off urine, stool etc. and for all such purposes, he has to exercise the mind, has to speak and make movement. The omniscient Lords have therefore asked to undertake such essential activities with utmost care and vigilance. Simultaneously they have stipulated that the scope for such activities should be continually reduced so that one can proceed in the direction of remaining tuned to soul. Observance of such care and vigilance while undertaking the essential activities is termed as Samiti.

Jain tradition lays the following five Samities. i) Iryā Samiti: This pertains to vigilance while making movement. One should remain careful not to hurt or disturb even the minute beings during his movement. ii) Bhāshā Samiti: This pertains to vigilance while speaking. One should be careful to speak truth in a way that does not hurt the sentiments of anyone. iii) Eshanā Samiti: This pertains to vigilance while intending to procure food, water and other articles. They should be procured in a way that involves minimum possible violence. 4) Ādān Nikkhevanā Samiti: This pertains to observance of vigilance while taking, placing or moving anything so that the insects or other living beings lying on the articles or at that place are not hurt or disturbed. 5) Parishthāpanikā Samiti: This pertains to vigilance in disposal of urine, stool, etc. One should remain careful not to hurt any living being while disposing them off.

Resorting to these Samities is required when it is not possible to observe Gupties. The first, fourth and fifth Samities pertain to physical activities, second to vocal activity and the third mainly to mental activity. They are laid from the consideration of monastic life and are therefore normally treated as applicable to monks and nuns. Actually, they are meant for every spiritual aspirant. Those belonging to the lay cadre also need to observe utmost care and vigilance while undertaking their activities. This can be evidenced by Dashvaikālik Sutra. Though it was primarily composed for monastic order, it does provide general criteria for observing Samiti. In chapter 5 it raises the following questions.

Kaham Chare Kaham Chitthe Kaham Āse Kaham Sae
Kaham Bhujanto Bhāsanato Pāvam Kammam Na Bandhai

It means: How should one move, how should he stand, how should he sit, how should he sleep, how should he eat and how should he speak so that he would not incur the bondage of Karma?

These are the questions, which pertain to the monastic as well as lay life. The Sutra provides the reply that one should stand, sit, sleep, eat and speak with vigilance so that he would not incur the bondage of Karma. That is the essence of Samiti. If one actually moves, stands, etc. with total care and vigilance, how would he incur the bondage of Karma?

It should be noted that the purpose of Samiti and Gupti is to observe Ahinsā. That is laid in the form of averting hurt to other living beings. The people do not realize that this precept calls for observing amity towards every living being. We therefore come across those, who take care not to hurt a fly or an ant, but do not hesitate in cheating their customers, nor do they mind indulging in adulteration of goods that may result in hazard to the life of consumers. It is also noticed that monks and nuns in India scatter urine on the streets so that it does not generate organism. This is done in the name of Parishthāpanikā Samiti, but they overlook the fact that while doing so they are contravening the very purpose of observing it.

This happens on account of the exclusive emphasis on averting only direct hurting. Ahinsā therefore needs to be understood in right perspective. The concept of amity is inherent in Ahinsā. It must be associated with sympathy and compassion. Innate love and affections are the inalienable parts thereof. It is evident that

when one loves somebody, he does not hurt him. Even when one is overcome with acute rage, it is seen that he does not become violent towards those whom he loves. Amity is thus the antithesis of violence.

This aspect of Ahinsā may seem to be militating against the popular concept of renouncement, which is normally associated with giving up ties of the family members and other relatives. Renouncing does not, however, mean that the person has to give up amity and affection. It actually means that he wants to reach a level, where he cannot confine his affection to his family, friends and other relations. He has outgrown that limitation, and now he wants to spread it, spread it to the entire realm of consciousness.

This does not mean that one should bear attachment for anyone. How can he do it, when he wants to remain detached? He does not want to have attachment even for his own body. He considers every living being on the same footing as himself. Affection would innately flow from within. As such, he would remain vigilant to protect the interests of others and be willing to sacrifice his own. For that purpose he would exercise his physical, vocal and mental faculties in common interest, when necessary. Otherwise, he would endeavor to remain tuned to the soul. In other words, he would observe Samiti with the objective of practicing Gupti.

The objects of senses and defiling instincts (Vishay and Kashāy), as they are called, are the main obstacles that come in the way of spiritual pursuit. Every spiritual aspirant therefore needs to overcome the same. For that purpose the people normally adopt restraints and observe severe austerities. That usually does not help in uprooting the defilement, and it happens to bounce back when the suppressing forces are not operative. In stanzas 6 to 8 Shrimad therefore presents the ways of effectively removing those obstacles.

6) Panch Vishayamān Rāgdwesh Virahitatā, Panch Pramāde Na Male Manano Kshobh Jo;
Dravya, Kshetra Ne Kāl, Bhāv Pratibandh Van, Vicharavun Udayādhin Pan Veetlobh Jo. Apoorva.

Without craving or aversion for five sense-objects and avoiding the mental distraction from five types of indolence, we may move about as ordained and lust-free, without impact of substance, space, time or mode.

When?

It would be remembered that the previous two stanzas related to the state, where one can stay calmly within the Self. For that purpose one has to overcome his indulgence in objects of senses and defiling instincts, which are the major factors that perturb the mind. This stanza deals with the former. Touch, taste, odor, sight and sound are the five objects of senses and skin, tongue, nose, eyes and ears are the respective organs with which one can avail the sense objects. The worldly beings are used to indulge therein depending upon the sense organs they are equipped with.

We, human beings, are imbibed with all the five sense organs and can therefore avail every object of sense. Mere availing of the objects is not objectionable. As a matter of fact, it is not possible to prevent a sense organ from availing the object of its sense. For instance, the tongue is going to experience the taste of what is taken in the mouth, the nose is going to feel the odor that it comes across, and so on. The problem arises when one develops attachment or resentment for any of them. If one comes across a beautiful girl, there is nothing wrong in making out that she is beautiful. Similarly if he comes across an ugly one, it is not out of place to make out that she is ugly. What, however, happens is that one becomes enamored of the beauty and despises the ugliness. In other words, he develops attachment for the former and resentment towards the latter. Similarly he likes to have tasty food, pleasant odor etc. and abhors distasteful food, unpleasant odor etc. Such sense of craving and aversion leads to acquisition of Karma and that needs to be avoided.

This stanza therefore urges to avail the sense objects dispassionately. It means that one should take food only for nourishment without regard for its taste. Similarly he should have dispassionate attitude towards rough or smooth touch, sweet or foul smell, beautiful or ugly sight and thrilling or harsh sound. He should merely know and stay aware of the nature of the object concerned. It is thus necessary to remain free from mental distraction while availing any object. In that case one would not acquire the bondage of Karma.

Staying tuned to the Self necessitates utmost vigilance. There are various factors that lead to the loss of vigilance and to mental distraction. That is known as Pramād (indolence). Depending upon the source from which it may arise, Pramād is considered mainly of five types, viz. i) attachment to the objects of senses, ii)

indulgence in defilement, iii) slumbering, iv) physical attraction and v) unnecessary talks. The role of attachment has been discussed above and that of defilement is to be dealt with in the subsequent two stanzas. We have therefore to consider here slumbering, physical attraction and unnecessary talks.

Slumbering: This denotes excessive or undue sleep. As such, it needs to be differentiated from the normal sleep, which is a physical necessity. Six or seven hours' sleep is usually considered a necessity. That much sleep is, however, required on account of the stress and strain with which we have been living. If one can live calmly without undergoing stress, he would need less sleep. The scriptural precepts have therefore laid down three hours' sleep for the monastic order. Those, who resort to meditation, may not require even that much. Lord Mahavir, for instance, stayed almost sleepless during the period of his spiritual pursuit. One should therefore take minimum possible sleep so as to remain vigilant during the remaining period.

Physical attraction: This denotes worldly affection, which differs from pure innate love. When one has physical attraction for anyone, he remains enamored of that particular person. His attention remains more focused towards him or her. As such, it becomes hard for him to remain vigilant. The attraction for the person causes mental distraction, which comes in the way of maintaining vigilance.

Unnecessary talks: This denotes gossiping and stray talks. We are used to indulge in unnecessary talks and discussion on many occasions. This becomes more obvious at the time of socializing. The subjects of talks may differ from group to group and time to time. Mostly they are of four types relating to politics, sex, food and socialite. Such talks do not serve any purpose except killing the time. The human life is very precious and should not be frittered away; it needs to be utilized for securing the lasting happiness. Constant vigilance is a 'must' for that. This stanza therefore calls for avoiding all the types of Pramād and to spend the life in spiritual pursuit.

The sense of attachment or resentment, which has been discussed above, would relate to some object and would vary from person to person. For instance, one may have high level of attachment for someone and resentment towards another. Similarly he may relish certain variety of food and have distaste for others. Such inclinations or disinclinations relate to some animate or inanimate matter, which is termed as Dravya.

Moreover, the attachment for the same person or object may not remain constant. For instance, one may be enamored of his spouse at one time, but later on he may lose interest in her; or he may start resenting the very food that he once found tasteful. Similarly one may adore lovely hairs of his beloved, but if he comes across one of them in his food or water, he would scream. Such varying inclinations occur on account of changes in place and time, and are termed as pertaining to Kshetra and Kāl. The same logic applies to the changes in mode, which is termed as Bhāv. Such positive as well as negative inclinations in respect of any Dravya, Kshetra, Kāl or Bhāv serve as obstacles in the way of spiritual pursuit. They are termed here as Pratibandh, which need to be averted.

Though the monastic life is supposed to have no concern with any particular place or time, Pratibandh can occur even in that life. For instance, while deciding upon a place for spending monsoon, a monk may think that it should be spent at a place, where there are comfortable and conducive environments. One may also think that he is better off in winter than in summer or he may think that the old age is creates the problems and may wish that he could have remained young. Similarly he may think that he should move to a place where he is welcome. All such factors cause Pratibandh. This stanza therefore contemplates about staying above all the considerations and to accept wholeheartedly the situations that may arise from time to time.

7) Krodh Pratye To Vartte Krodhwabhāvatā, Mān Pratye To Deenpanānun Mān Jo;
Māyā Pratye Māyā Sākshi Bhāvani, Lobh Pratye Nahin Lobh Samān Jo. Apoorva.

There may prevail provocative disposition towards anger, humility towards arrogance, unconcern towards concernment and miserliness in coveting-----When?

This stanza deals with overcoming of the defiling instincts, which are termed as Kashāys, and which constitute the obstacles in spiritual pursuit. Krodh (anger), Mān (arrogance), Māyā (This term is generally taken in the sense of deception, but here it is used in the sense of feeling concerned.) and Lobh (greed) are

four main types of Kashäy. Depending upon the degree of intensity, each of them is subdivided into four sub-categories. The most intense category, which lasts inordinately long, is termed as Anantānubandhi meaning infinitely lasting category. Somewhat less intense category, which does not last so long, is termed as Apratyākhyānāvaraniya, meaning the category that cannot be overcome even by taking vows for the purpose. Far less intense category is termed as Pratyākhyānāvaraniya, meaning the category that can be overcome by taking the vows to avert the same. The last one is very subtle and is called Sanjwalan category.

The spiritual pursuit mainly consists of overcoming these Kashäys. As pointed out earlier, most of the aspirants try to control them by resorting to restraints and austerities, but that does not help in uprooting them. The worldly soul has been indulging in all sorts of defiling instincts since the time immemorial on account of ignorance of its true Self. So long as one perceives those instincts as desirable and helpful in maintaining his interests, how would he be inclined to give them up? It is therefore necessary that they be perceived as unbecoming and hurtful. That can occur, when one realizes that he is the everlasting soul and the body has been obtained for a while by virtue of his Karma. In that case he would stop feeling much concerned about well-being of the body. His primary purpose would then be to realize the true nature of soul and hence he would not feel inclined to indulge in defilement.

Disinclination is a very vital factor in overcoming any trait. How can one be angry, arrogant etc. unless he is inclined to do so? Disinclination would prompt him to resist such impulses. This stanza therefore states that one needs to be angry at the instinct of anger, be proud of remaining humble, be concerned about the discernment and stay miser in resorting to greediness. To put in other words, if one cannot remain without being angry, he should feel angry with the anger itself; if he wants to be proud, he should be proud of humility; if he needs to be concerned, he should be concerned for remaining unconcerned; and if he cannot avert greediness, he should resort to it miserly. That is the reliable way for overcoming Kashäys.

8) Bahu Upasargakartā Pratyē Pan Krodh Nahin, Vande Chakri Tathāpi Na Male Mān Jo;
Deh Jāy Pan Māyā Thāy Na Romamān, Lobh Nahin Chho Prabal Siddhi Nidān Jo. Apoorva.

There may prevail no wrath even towards those who inflict acute pain, no pride even if an emperor bows, not a trace of concern even in case of loss of life and no coveting even in case of highly treasured accomplishments.
When?

Even if one practices as suggested above, some degree of defilement may arise on account of conditioning. For instance, take the case of anger, which is considered the cause of all other Kashäys. A sensible person would realize that he should not indulge in anger and would like to avoid it. He may, however, become angry when something happens contrary to his expectations. He also finds it hard not to be proud of doing something praiseworthy and adorable. Similarly, it is not always possible to remain totally unconcerned and devoid of temptation. How would it be possible to overcome the same?

Moreover, there are people, who continue to hurt, even though we may forgive them for their misdeeds. Would that not provoke us to fight? To what extent can we forgive and extend benevolent behavior against the wicked mentality? The reply is simple. We should be compassionate towards such people and confront their temperament by patiently bearing what they do. Is there any justification in defiling ourselves simply because someone else behaves wrongly? We should better cultivate the attributes of forgiving, gentleness, straightforwardness and contentment, and face the negative attitude with the positive attributes.

This is meant for the spiritual aspirant who is moving between 6th to 7th stages. The stanza therefore states how he needs to stay in the situations, which are provocative and prone to arouse defilement. For instance, someone may inflict intense pain; but the aspirant should not indulge in wrath towards him and patiently bear the pain. By virtue of one's spiritual development, an emperor may be induced to bow to him; but the aspirant should not feel elated thereby; instead of harboring vanity or arrogance, he should remain humble. Circumstances may arise, which would cause the loss of life; but the aspirant should not worry about it and should willingly give up the body, if necessary. The spiritual pursuit may also lead to highly esteemed accomplishments; but the aspirant should not be tempted to use the same for any worldly purpose.

9) Najnabhäv, Mundabhäv Sah Asnänatä, Adantadhovan Ädi Param Prasiddha Jo;
Kesh, Rom, Nakh Ke Ange Shrungär Nahin, Dravyabhäv Sanyammay Nirgranth Siddha Jo. Apoorva.

Resorting to the well known attributes of nudity, shaven-head, non-bathing, non-brushing etc. and avoiding hair-dye, manicure or other make up, we may remain totally disentangled while observing external and internal restraints. When?

It would be remembered that at the very outset Shrimad had presented the aspiration to get freed from the external as well as internal entanglement. The beginning in that respect occurs with the right perception, which arises when perception-related delusion is overcome. The endeavor thereafter rests on overcoming the character-related delusion. For that purpose one has to exercise increasing level of control over his behavior. Observance of Samiti and Gupti, staying away from the objects of senses and overcoming of defiling instincts as stipulated in stanzas 4 to 8 are the means for that purpose. This stanza now depicts the picture of a truly disentangled one.

What we are now going to consider is applicable to the spiritual aspirants belonging to the monastic cadre or to a level corresponding to that. Such people have already got rid of the entanglement pertaining to extraneous possessions. The entanglement that stays at this level pertains to clothing, appearance etc. In order to avert the same it is stated here that the aspirant should remain unclad, should have shaven head, should not take bath, should not brush teeth and should not resort to hair-dye, manicure etc.

A couple of points arise here. Hairstyle, hair-dye, manicure etc. are resorted to for the sake of beautification and physical attraction. A spiritual aspirant obviously needs to avoid that. Bath and brushing of teeth are, however, undertaken for cleanliness, not for beautification. The body is prone to get unclean and the mouth to get sticky. It would therefore be necessary to clean them. When it is acceptable to clean the relevant parts of the body after toilet, why should bath and brushing be forbidden? Similarly why is it necessary to avoid clothes? What is the spiritual significance of remaining naked? Would it not be indecent and offending? These questions are reasonable and we need to seek satisfactory replies. Since it is particularly hard to justify nudity, let us start with that.

Clothes are put on mainly on the grounds of protection and decency. The body needs to be protected from cold, heat etc. and clothes provide a reasonable degree of protection from the extreme weather conditions. The stipulation to remain unclad mainly relates to monks and that was laid in light of the conditions prevailing in India. There it mostly rains during the monsoon period and monks are not supposed to travel during that period. As such, rain does not pose a major problem. Winters are cool, but not very cold. The temperatures do not go below freezing point except in the Himalayan ranges. Summers are, of course, hot, but they are not unbearable and one of the criteria for spiritual pursuit is to bear discomfort. As such, the monks do not need clothes on the ground of protection.

Now, let us consider the social norm. Remaining without clothes is considered indecent. It may also be perceived as offending and sentimentally hurting. Such concepts are based on the ground that remaining without clothes results in exposure of genitals. That is repellent and no one would like to do so in the presence of anyone else. The offending sense, however, occurs because of our associating sexiness with genitals. If we do not associate it with sexiness, we would not feel it offensive. That is evidenced by the fact that we are not at all perturbed, when we see a naked child.

Such difference in approach arises, because childhood is innocent and no sexual instinct can be attributed to it. Now it should be born in mind that no one except the monks and other aspirants belonging to a similar level is expected to remain unclad. Those aspirants have reached a state where sexual instinct has been entirely overcome. They are as innocent as children and sexiness cannot be associated with them. Moreover, monks have relinquished the worldly life. As such, they can be expected to stay beyond the social norms. The strictures against nakedness cannot therefore be made applicable to them. Hence, there should be no objection to their remaining unclad. On the contrary, dispensing with clothes would be helpful in relieving them of the trouble of procuring, cleaning and maintaining the same.

As said above, however, the stipulation to remain unclad was laid in light of the climatic conditions

prevailing in India and it cannot be applied to the areas of extreme temperatures. One in the temperate region cannot afford to go without adequate protection in winter. Moreover, it is not practicable to go without clothes at places, where there are strong social sentiments or legal strictures against that. It is also noteworthy that Shrimad has used here the term `Najnabhäv (sense of nudity) not Najnatä (nakedness). As such, every person belonging to a particular spiritual level need not remain unclad. As a matter of fact, insisting on remaining unclad or on any other mode constitutes a knot, an entanglement, which needs to be avoided. One has therefore to take into consideration all the relevant aspects and decide whether to remain clad or unclad.

Now let us consider the question of taking bath. The monastic people do not undertake any activity, which would make them dirty and hence should justify taking bath. Moreover, they belong to a state, where bodily instinct has ceased to prevail. Similarly they are not supposed to take sticky, enriched food that would necessitate cleaning of teeth.

A spiritual aspirant needs to remain detached towards the body. In order to avert the attachment for the same, he would better stay unclad, shaven-headed and without bath or cleaning of teeth. In the case of body becoming dirty or mouth getting sticky one may resort to some mode of cleaning. On the other hand, hair-style, hair-dye, manicure and other make up, which are meant for beautification and attractiveness, need to be avoided. Refraining therefrom is necessary for averting the physical entanglement.

The last line of the stanza states that a disentangled person should be observing the material as well as the modal restraints. The material restraint consists of averting the external entanglements, while modal one consists of remaining free from internal ones like indulgence in defiling instincts, particularly of craving and aversion. How to overcome the same has been indicated in the previous four stanzas. A spiritual aspirant should thus stay free from all sorts of the entanglements.

10) Shatru Mitra Pratye Varte Samdarshitä, Män Amäne Varte Te Ja Swabhäv Jo;
Jivit Ke Marane Nahin Nyoonädhikatä, Bhav Mokshe Pan Shuddha Varte Sambhäv Jo. Apoorva.

Let there prevail equanimity towards friends or foes and for respect or disrespect; let there be no concern for life or death, and let pure equanimity prevail irrespective of the embodied or the liberated state. When?

This stanza deals with maintaining equanimity in all the circumstances. In our life we come across different types of people and various types of situations. If we like someone or perceive a situation as favorable, we develop attachment for the same. If we dislike the person or perceive the situation as unfavorable, we resent that. We do not remember that such attachment and resentment lead to acquisition of Karma, which leads to the continuing cycle of birth and death. That can be avoided by observing equanimity. Therefore the main objective of the spiritual pursuit is to gain equanimity. The perfect equanimity itself amounts to liberation.

As a spiritual aspirant continues to overcome defilement, he stops perceiving anyone as a friend or a foe. By virtue of the right perception, he realizes that every soul is imbibed with infinite perception and infinite enlightenment. The only difference is of manifestation. Some have manifested them fully and the others partially. As such, he cultivates regard for everyone. Eventually he can develop it to a stage, where he forsakes his likes and dislikes altogether. This is evidenced by the life of Lord Pärshwanäth. During his spiritual pursuit while he was meditating, Meghmäli, the god of rain, tried to drown him by causing torrential rainfall, while Dharanendra, the head of snake world, protected him by lifting him and holding the fang over his head. The Lord, however, did not have any sense of pleasure or displeasure for either of them. Neither did he admire Dharanendra for his helpful attitude nor did he despise Meghmäli for causing the affliction. Knowing that every one behaves according to his nature, he maintained equanimity towards both.

The concept of equanimity is at times misunderstood. Some people treat it as equality of all. That is wrong. Truthful and liars, meritorious and sinners, virtuous and vicious, straightforward and crooked, generous and selfish, cannot be at par. Even an enlightened being does not equate them. He knows wickedness as evil and wholesome attitude as helpful and desirable. We are, however, prone to treat the wicked with despise, while the enlightened treats them with affectionate compassion. He feels sad that the wicked people do not

look to their own interest. When Sangam, for instance, perpetrated terrible afflictions upon Lord Mahavir during the period of his spiritual pursuit, the Lord not only remained unaffected, he actually felt compassionate that the poor guy was acquiring horrible Karma. The Lord was so overcome with the idea of the consequences that Sangam would have to bear, that tears came into his eyes.

Now let us consider the case of respect and disrespect. We are prone to be elated when we are respected and feel disheartened otherwise. The spiritual aspirant needs to remain indifferent in either of the situations. Whether one adores or disdains should be of no relevance to him. The question may arise, 'How would it be possible to remain unaffected in face of grossly abusive words?' The reply is provided by an interesting anecdote of Lord Buddha's life. Once a mean person came to him with the intent to perturb him and began to hurl abuses. Since Buddha remained totally unperturbed in spite of filthy abuses poured in by the man, the latter asked Buddha how he could remain so unaffected in face of terrible abuses. Buddha then asked, 'If you offer something to someone and if the latter declines to accept the same, what happens to the offer?' The man replied, 'In that case the thing would remain with me.' Thereupon Buddha said, 'I have not accepted any of the abuses that you hurled against me. As such, they belong to you, not to me.' For an enlightened one like him the words were merely lifeless matter; how could they affect his consciousness?

The enlightened people have the same approach towards life and death as well. They know that every life comes to the end. How long one would live depends upon the life span laid for him. They are therefore willing to lead the enlightened life during their life span and are prepared to court the death when it comes. Whether the life span is long or they have to immediately court the death makes no difference to them.

The last line of the stanza states that one should not even be concerned whether he gains liberation now or has to remain embodied for a few births. This may seem a bit intriguing. Since one undertakes the spiritual pursuit for attaining liberation, how can he remain indifferent to the length of time required for that? It, however, needs to be remembered that the time for liberation depends upon Karma in balance at the time of gaining the right perception and the effort put in to eradicate the same. If the existing Karmas are mild, they can be easily eradicated. If they are strong, it may take some time to eradicate the same. Moreover, there can be indelible Karmas that have to be borne, before they are extinguished. For that purpose one may be required to take births. As such, a spiritual aspirant quietly bears the consequences of his Karmas as they arise and patiently waits for the time of attaining liberation.

11) Ekäki Vicharato Vali Smashänamän, Vali Parvatamän Vägh Sinh Sanyog Jo;
Adol Äsan Ne Manamän Nahin Kshobhatä, Param Mitrano Jäne Pämäyä Yog Jo. Apoorva.

While moving lonely even on cremation grounds or in mountain ranges in the midst of tigers and lions, we may remain in steady posture without perturbation in mind, as if we be in the company of the closest friends.

When?

It would be remembered that the stanza 9 mainly related to the contemplation about the aspirant's approach towards the body. At that level one must have overcome all the defiling instincts except the subtle ones. As such, he is expected to maintain a high level of equanimity as described in stanza 10. It may be easy to maintain it under relatively favorable conditions like living within an order, where the daily requirements can be met relatively at ease and where one can get guidance from Guru or other accomplished ones, when necessary. It is, however, hard to do so under adverse circumstances. The real test of the aspirant lies in maintaining equanimity in the adverse circumstances.

This stanza therefore contemplates about moving alone in desolate places like cremation grounds, mountain ranges etc. Not only is it hard to get the daily requirements at such places, but they could also be frightful. The ghosts and other evil spirits might be moving on the cremation grounds, and the mountainous regions might be infested with wild animals like lions, tigers, etc. Under such circumstances it is hard to maintain equanimity and to remain fearless.

The people live with fear about happening something untoward relating to the body and its comforts. Fears pertaining to burglary, confiscation or loss of property, loss of respect, accident, disease etc. fall in that

category. Their biggest fear is, however, in respect of death. Since death is necessarily the ultimate outcome of life, there is nothing untoward about it. One should therefore be ready to welcome it, whenever it comes.

The worldly beings are not ready for death because of their failure to lead the life purposefully. The right way to overcome the fear is to remember that the human life is meant for bringing the cycle of birth and death to the end. One should lead the life in light of that perspective. The aspirant here is supposed to have done so, and hence he is not afraid of death. In order to test his fearlessness, he aspires to live in the lonely places and to court the risks inherent in that type of life.

The question may arise, 'Is it necessary to go to such frightful places?' The question would be pertinent from the worldly viewpoint. We are, however, considering the situation of a high spiritual level. The aspirant at that level is not happy with his oscillation between 6th and 7th stages. He is eager to overcome fear and to stay in constant vigilance. For that purpose he is willing to take the risk. His objective is to stay above all physical considerations so as to abide at ease within the soul. Since the soul is essentially above all sorts of connections, it is necessary to practice living in the lonely places and to stay tuned to the soul.

That is, of course, tough; but not so for those, who have developed a high level of amity and friendliness. The sense of amity flowing from their hearts hardly gives scope for hostility. Even the lifelong enemies forget their enmity under the influence of their innate friendliness. We learn that snakes and weasels, cows and tigers, rats and cats used to sit in the Lords' assemblies facing one another without indulging in animus nature. The sense of animosity could not arise under the impact of amity and universal friendship prevailing there. This stanza therefore contemplates for abiding at ease in the midst of wild animals. The aspirant has no reason to be perturbed by their presence. He would feel as comfortable as if he be in the company of the closest friends.

This does not mean that one would not come across any trouble or that he goes to the desolate places with the assurance that no harm would be done to him. It may happen that some evil spirit or a wild animal is not influenced by his friendliness and hurts. We know that the cobra Chandkaushik was not initially influenced even by the innate compassion of Lord Mahavir and actually bit him. Similarly his erstwhile pupil Goshälak did hurl Tejoleshyä (fire missile) at the Lord even in the omniscient state. A spiritual aspirant therefore goes to the desolate and forlorn places fully prepared for any eventuality. If something untoward happens, he is not perturbed and accepts the same. Since he is out to stay within his true nature, how would he be affected even if he has to give up the life?

Another question that would arise in this connection is, 'What would the spiritual aspirant do at such lonely places?' The reply is that he contemplates about his true nature. In other words, he merely meditates. The third line of the stanza therefore states that one remains in steady posture with an undisturbed mind.

12) Ghor Tapashcharyāmān Pan Manane Tāp Nahin, Saras Anne Nahin Manane Prasannabhäv Jo;
Rajkan Ke Riddhi Vaimānik Devani, Sarve Mānyā Pudgal Ek Swabhäv Jo. Apoorva.

There may be no mental strain even from severe austerity and no sense of delight by delicious food; the dust particles or heavenly prosperity may be seen merely as lifeless objects of the identical nature. When?

Aside from facing the physical hurt, a spiritual aspirant may also come across other problems. He may not get food for several days and might be required to observe fasts. For instance, Lord Rushabhdev had to go without food for one year and Lord Mahavir for six months. Moreover, one may also voluntarily undertake severe austerities in order to overcome the subtle levels of defilement, indolence etc. This stanza relates to the contemplation of spiritual aspirant while observing the austerities. In the first line it states that one should not feel any physical or mental strain even while undertaking the severe austerities.

The concept of austerity is, however, not to be restricted to observance of fasts. More emphasis would rest on the internal austerities like Swādhyāy (study of Self), Dhyān (meditation), Kāusagga (staying tuned to soul), etc. In other words, the austerity would mainly consist of concentrating the mind on the true nature of soul. When one is deeply involved in such concentration, the idea of taking food may not occur to him.

That may result in loss of physical energy. Since, however, the aspirant stays beyond the bodily instincts, he remains unconcerned about its need for food. He knows that the purpose of observing austerities is to attain equanimity and the way is to stay away from physical gratification.

Another part of the contemplation relates to getting good food. An aspirant would not feel the sense of delight, if he happens to get delicious food. Food is required for maintaining the body; why should one be concerned about its type? Food is lifeless, and the spiritual aspirant knows that the lifeless matters go on assuming different forms from time to time. That is applicable to a dust particle as well as to a heavenly article. Whether one comes across the particle of dust or a heavenly object makes no difference to the spiritual aspirant.

As mentioned above, this contemplation pertains to those, who have been moving between 6th and 7th stages. By virtue of that and by observing equanimity in all the circumstances, one can come to a state where he can continuously maintain vigilance. As such, he does not fall back to the 6th stage and can stay at the 7th. The way is then open to him for proceeding to the next stage.

13) Em Parājay Karine Chāritramohano, Ävun Tyän Jyän Karan Apoorva Bhäv Jo;
Shreni Kshapak Shreni. That being an exclusively Jain terminology, let us explain it briefly.

Thus vanquishing the character-related delusion, I may reach the unprecedented state and then rising over the skipping ladder, may attain the unique contemplation of the extremely pure nature. -----When?

Since overcoming the perception-related delusion as stated in stanza 3, the endeavor of the aspirant has been directed towards destroying the delusion pertaining to character. Observance of Samities, Gupties etc. and overcoming of the defiling instincts were laid for that purpose. That was an incessant fight against the character-related delusion. Now the contemplation relates to the state, where he can continuously remain vigilant. As the spiritual aspirant thus totally overcomes invigilance, he rises to the eighth stage known as Apoorvakaran. Apoorva means unprecedented and Karan means actuating or endeavoring to bring about something. Apoorvakaran therefore stands for actuating to attain a level, which was never attained before.

Apoorvakaran occurs at two stages. As stated earlier, the spiritual pursuit mainly consists of overcoming the deluding Karma. Since that Karma is of two types, the overcoming also generally takes place at two stages. It has been the constant endeavor of the spiritual aspirants to reach those stages. Hardly, however, a worldly soul has succeeded in finally overcoming those categories of delusion. When one is therefore in a position to overcome either of them, it is considered as unprecedented.

There is, however, a major difference between the two Apoorvakarans. After overcoming the perception-related delusion, the aspirant is naturally inclined to endeavor for overcoming the character-related one. For that purpose he may have a long path to tread. After overcoming the character-related delusion one does not need to accomplish much except to stay in that state increasingly firmly. It means that the aspirant can finish his remaining journey very quickly. For that purpose one has to resort to the skipping ladder, which is known as Kshapak Shreni. That being an exclusively Jain terminology, let us explain it briefly.

Overcoming of the deluding Karma occurs either by calming it down or by destroying it (by eradicating its bondage). The former is known as Upasham and the latter as Kashäy. (What usually happens is that some Karmas are calmed down and some destroyed. As such, there is part Upasham and part Kshay, which is termed as Kshayopasham; but we are at present keeping it aside.) Upasham is analogous to purification of water by allowing the impurities to settle down. Since the impurities continue to exist in the water, they are bound to come up with the slightest disturbance in the water column. That state of purity is thus unstable. Similarly, Karma suppressed by Upasham mode becomes operative, when one loses sight of vigilance. In that case the aspirant is once again overcome by delusion. Upasham mode is thus unstable and does not last infinitely.

The initial progress of an aspirant, however, occurs in terms of Upasham. He pacifies the Karma that comes to the operative stage, i. e. he suppresses it and does not allow it to operate. Suppose, something untoward happens and one becomes angry. As he becomes aware of that instinct, he remembers that he should not

indulge in anger. He thus pacifies his anger. As he progresses in that direction, he realizes that the anger is unbecoming and adopts restraint for removing the same; in other words, he tries to get rid of the conditioning that induces him to be angry.

One thus tries to go ahead partly by pacification and partly by eradication. Though he is keen to rise on the spiritual ladder, his conditioning drags him downward. That upward and downward oscillation continues up to the seventh stage. The oscillation between the 6th and 7th stages occurs on that account. When one finally overcomes it, he reaches the end of that state and rises to the next stage. The progress thereafter is quicker. The stages 8 to 12 are of very short duration; one does not stay at any of them for more than 48 minutes.

The path from the eighth stage onward is bifurcated. One goes ahead either by calming down the remaining Karmas or by eradicating them. The former is called Upasham Shreni and the latter Kshapak Shreni. In either of the cases as one reaches the tenth stage, the deluding Karma is either totally calmed down or is entirely destroyed. Thereafter one moving by Upasham Shreni goes to the eleventh stage and then falls back. That happens by virtue of the pacified Karma becoming active. One progressing by Kshapak Shreni skips the eleventh stage and goes to the twelfth.

Shrimad happened to remember his previous lives and knew that he had earlier adopted Upasham Shreni and had fallen from the eleventh stage. He has mentioned in No. 170 of Vachanāmṛt that this had been seen with his own eyes and that he had experienced it. As such, he is now particular to avoid that path and contemplates to move ahead by resorting to Kshapak Shreni so that he would skip the eleventh stage and go ahead. That has been mentioned in the third line of this stanza.

Those, who intend to rise accordingly, should have developed a high level of discernment and awareness. They should also have implicit faith in the spiritual pursuit that they are undergoing. They are thus in a position to remain tuned to the nature of soul. This stanza therefore says that pure contemplation of the true nature would prevail at that level. That is termed as Shukladhyān.

Jain tradition specifies four types of meditation, of which Ārtadhyān and Raudradhyān are unwholesome and Dharmadhyān and Shukladhyān are wholesome. In the earlier stages the people remain more or less involved in Ārtadhyān and Raudradhyān. Dharmadhyān arises from the 5th stage and Shukladhyān from the 8th stage. Jain tradition does not consider it feasible to reach the eighth stage or to adopt Shukladhyān at present, at least in the area where we live. As such, this contemplation relates to an ideal.

14) Moh Swayambooraman Samudra Tari Kari, Sthiti Tyān Jyān Kshinamoh Gunsthān Jo;
Ant Samay Tyān Poorna Swaroop Vitrāg Thai, Pragatāvun Nij Kevaljnān Nidhān Jo. Apoorva.

Thus, crossing over Swayambhooraman sea (the largest sea) of delusion I may reach the state of elevation known as delusion-free state and attaining the total detachment at the end, I may manifest my inherent treasure of omniscience.

When?

Since it is very hard to overcome delusion, its overcoming is comparable to crossing of a vast ocean. Jain concept of geography stipulates consecutive masses of land and water alternating each other. That continues up to the largest ocean known as Swayambhooraman, which is unfathomable. Here the deluding Karma is compared with that vast ocean. Actually, the said Karma is more unfathomable than Swayambhooraman, because the worldly souls have been drifting over it since the time without beginning and still the end is not within the eyesight.

There is also another significance of that name. Swayam means self, Bhoo means to be and Raman means to play. As such, Swayambhooraman stands for playing on one's own. That interpretation appropriately applies to delusion, because soul has been indulging therein of its own choice. No one else, not even the deluding Karma, forces it to indulge that way. Though the deluding mode may arise under the impact of deluding Karma, every soul is free not to indulge in it.

Any way, when one overcomes the delusion, he rises to the 12th stage known as Kshinamoh, which means delusion-free stage. The remaining subtle categories of perception-obscuring, knowledge-obscuring and

obstructing Karmas come to the end at that state and the soul attains total detachment. That does not require much endeavor and is completed within 48 minutes. That leads to manifestation of the omniscience. Take the note; the omniscience does not come from outside; it was lying latent within and now manifests itself.

15) Chär Karma Ghanghāti Te Vyavachched Jyän, Bhavanän Beej Tano Ätyantik Näsh Jo;
Sarva Bhäv Jnäta Drashtä Sah Shuddhatä, Krutkrutya Prabhu Virya Anant Prakäsh Jo. Apoorva.

As the seed of embodiment is ultimately destroyed by uprooting of the four defiling Karmas, the soul may merely know and remain aware of each and every mode, and stay gratified with its infinitely illuminating vigor and inherent purity.
When?

Omniscience, which is inherent in the soul, becomes manifest, as and when the bondage of defiling Karmas is erased. All the four defiling Karmas, viz. the perception-obscuring, knowledge-obscuring, deluding and obstructive Karmas are destroyed at the end of 12th stage. As such, the omniscience manifests itself and one rises to the 13th stage of embodied omniscience. Births and deaths take place by virtue of the defiling Karmas. Since they are now uprooted, they cannot rise again. Hence, the soul has not to take the new birth.

Such omniscient Lords stay alive for their remaining life spans. The total purity of soul prevails in that state due to the absence of the defiling Karmas. In absence of the deluding Karma the Lords do not have any degree of attachment and stay entirely unattached. They remain only Jnäta-Drashtä, i. e. they merely know and remain aware of what happens. As there is no impact of perception-obscuring or knowledge-obscuring Karmas at that state, their perceiving and knowing capacity does not remain obscured. It prevails infinitely.

This does not mean that they have to look for what happens. Since they stay above all physical as well as mental considerations, the question of physically perceiving and knowing does not arise in their case. By virtue of the internal purity, whatever happens is automatically reflected within. No effort is involved therein. That happens as naturally as the objects lying in front of a mirror are reflected therein.

Every soul is inherently equipped with infinite vigor, but the obstructing Karma lays limits to its exercising. Since there is no impact of that Karma at the omniscient level, the said limiting factor ceases to operate. As a matter of fact, the term 'exercising' is not applicable to the omniscient Lords, because they do not make any effort; but whatever happens in the pure state, happens in full vigor. By virtue of the absence of obscuring Karma, there is no limit to their capability and it prevails with the infinite vigor.

Thus, the omniscient Lords do not do anything, nor are they required to do anything. They simply stay gratified with the purity of soul and the manifestation of its inherent attributes. This statement may not seem applicable to Tirthankars, who spend the rest of their lifetime in preaching the right faith. They, however, do it not because they are required to do. That is done spontaneously by virtue of Tirthankar Näm Karma that they had earned earlier. Since it is a non-defiling Karma, its operation does not affect the purity of soul.

16) Vedaniyädi Chär Karma Varte Jahän, Bali Sindarivat Äkruti Mätra Jo;
Te Dehäyush Ädhin Jeni Sthiti Chhe, Äyush Poorne Matiye Daihic Pätra Jo. Apoorva.

With only situation-conferring and other non-defiling Karmas prevailing during the remaining life, the body may merely retain its shape like a burnt cord and no embodiment be warranted at the end of life.
When?

Earlier it was mentioned that the spiritual pursuit mainly consists of overcoming the deluding Karma. There are, however, other Karmas, which also need to be overcome. There are mainly eight types of Karmas. Four of them are termed as defiling, because they tend to defile the state of soul. Omniscience arises when those defiling Karmas are destroyed. That occurs at the 13th stage, which is known as Sayogi Kevali, meaning the embodied omniscience. The omniscient Lords stay in the mortal bodies up to the end of their lives.

There are four non-defiling Karmas, viz. situation conferring, physique determining, life span giving and status determining, which still prevail at that stage. Being non-defiling, they do not affect the purity of soul, which remains fully manifest in that state. The embodiment at that state is therefore comparable to a burnt cord. As a cord retains its shape in spite of being burnt, the Lords also continue to retain their bodies so long as the non-defiling Karmas remain operative. Such Karmas normally lapse at the end of the life span. Thereby the Lords reach Karmaless state, which does not require embodiment. As such, they do not obtain new body and rise to the next state of Ayogi Kevali, which means the state of unembodied omniscience.

In rare cases some non-defiling Karmas may continue to prevail by the end of that life. Though the life span Karma necessarily comes to the end, the remaining three Karmas may still stay. In that case, the Lords undertake a procedure called Kevali Samudghāt, (simultaneous exposure by the omniscient) for expiating them. Thereby the Lords drag all the remaining Karmas towards the soul and shed them off simultaneously.

That procedure consists of Dand , Kapāt and Manthān and that takes only eight Samays (one Samay is the infinitesimal part of a second). Dand means a staff. At the first Samay the Lord expands the soul in the shape of a staff long enough to touch the lowest level of universe at the bottom and the highest level at the top. At the second Samay he expands it in easterly and westerly directions so as to touch the eastern and western ends of the universe. That is termed as Kapāt. At the third Samay he expands it northward and southward so as to touch the northern and southern ends of the universe. That is termed as Manthān, because that shape resembles a churning rod. At the fourth Samay the Lord fills the entire space of the universe with Manthān. At the fifth Samay he vacates the space. At the sixth Samay he contracts the Manthān back to the shape of Kapāt. At the seventh Samay he contracts Kapāt to the shape of Dand and at the eighth Samay he contracts Dand and assumes the original size of the body. That procedure removes the remaining three Karmas and the Lord rises to the 14th stage.

17) Man, Vachan, Käyā Ne Karmani Varganā, Chhoote Jahān Sakal Pudgal Sambandh Jo;
Evun Ayogi Gunsthānak Tyān Vartatun, Mahābhāgya Sukhdāyak Poorna Abandh Jo. Apoorva.

Being freed from mental, verbal and physical particles of Karma and from all connections with the lifeless objects, there may prevail the highly graceful, blissful and entirely unbinding, unembodied state-----When?

Now we come to the state of liberation, which literally means freedom from bondage. Attachment for the worldly situations constitutes the bondage and that bondage leads to the different situations of happiness or unhappiness, of pleasure or pain and so on. As the worldly soul reacts to such situations with the sense of craving or aversion, it acquires new bondage. The liberation means freedom from all such bondage so that soul can experience its true state of infinite perception, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss.

Liberation is the utmost abstract state, which is almost impossible to be expressed in words. The bliss in the state of liberation is beyond verbal description; one can only experience it. Since Shrimad had the glimpse of that state, he describes it in this and the next stanza. Mental, verbal and physical faculties arise as the consequence of Karma. Since all Karmas stand destroyed in the liberated state, there is no connection with those faculties and the soul remains entirely unembodied. There is thus no interaction of any Karma or of any other lifeless matter in that state.

In the Letter of Six Fundamentals, Shrimad has described the state of liberation as under.

“ Soul has been described above as being Kartā of material Karma and thereby as being subject to their consequences. Those Karmas can, however, be terminated as well; because even if the defiling instincts etc. are evidently very acute, they can be reduced by discontinuing their practice, by avoiding their contact and by calming them down. They are reducible and can be destroyed.”

It is a principle that what can be reduced, can also be destroyed. If soul stays perfectly vigilant, it can avoid the new bondage. Since the old Karmas are stripped off after extending the consequences, their bondage can come to the end. The embodiment occurs in order to bear the consequences of Karmas. If there is no bondage of Karma, there would be no embodiment. Such pure, unembodied state of soul itself is liberation.

In that state the soul ceases to be Kartä (actuator) of any Karma, because being fully enlightened, it does not indulge in defilement. Thus, it retains its purity and stays in perfect bliss forever.

In Ätmasiddhishästra the liberation has been described as the state, where there is complete disassociation of soul from the embodiment and all other aspects. The liberated state denotes the Karmaless state. As such, the soul does not have the impact of any bondage and it is disassociated from all the worldly aspects. There is no connection whatsoever with any lifeless particle. That is the ultimate disconnection in the sense that reconnection is not going to take place. It is eternal, never ends and is full of infinite happiness. It is blissful and the liberated soul avails its inherent bliss forever.

18) Ek Paramänumätrani Male Na Sparshatä, Poorna Kalank Rahit Adol Swaroop Jo;
Shuddha Niranjana Chaitanyamoorti Ananyamay, Agurulaghu, Amoorta Sahajpadroop Jo. Apoorva.

It is the state where there is no contact with a single particle; it is unadulterated, non-oscillating, pure, untainted, conscious incarnate, unique, unalterable, intangible and innate state. ----- When?

Soul is inherently pure; but in the worldly state its purity is tainted and remains unstable on account of the interaction with the particles of Karma. In the liberated state, there is no contact with any particle. As such, it is free from all adulteration and remains in the same state. In other words, it is spotless and does not oscillate. Being spotless, it is untainted consciousness. That state is unique in the sense that there is no other state, which can be compared with it.

The term Agurulaghu used here literally means neither more nor less. In Jain terminology, it means that the inherent properties of a matter remain the same irrespective of the conditions. For instance, knowing is the main property of soul and that remains with it in every state. That property may not be manifest in different states, but the soul cannot be devoid of it. This can be seen from the fact that some degree of its knowing capability is manifest even in the lowest level of existence. That is fully manifested in the state of liberation and remains unalterable.

In the state of liberation the soul does not hold the attributes of touch, taste, odor or color and as such, it is intangible. Moreover, its nature of infinite bliss is fully manifested and it stays in that innate state forever. In stanza 91 of Ätmasiddhishästra Shrimad has described that state as under.

Dehädic Sanyogano, Ätyantic Viyog;
Siddha Moksh Shäshvat Pade, Nij Anant Sukh Bhog.

With the ultimate dissociation of soul from connection with the embodiment etc.
the soul eternally stays in the liberated state and experiences its own infinite bliss.

19) Poorvaprayogädi Kärananä Yogathi, Oordhwagaman Siddhālay Präpta Susthit Jo;
Sädi Anant Anant Samādhisukhamān, Anant Darshan, Jnān Anant Sahit Jo. Apoorva.

By virtue of earlier thrust etc. the liberated soul rises upward and settles in the abode of liberated. It stays in infinite and absolute bliss that has beginning but no end, and is imbibed with infinite perception and infinite enlightenment. When?

It was stated in the last stanza that the liberated state is intangible, unadulterated, stable, unique, etc. Now this stanza specifies its location and narrates how the soul reaches there. That abode lies at the top of the universe. The space, which is termed as Äkäsh, is infinite. There is no end to it. Within a part of the space there exist two ether-like substances known as Dharmästäkäy and Adharmästäkäy. They are instrumental to Jiv and Pudgal (intangible soul and tangible lifeless matter) in making movement or in remaining steady. That part of the space is termed as Lokäkäsh or the universe. Siddhashilä lies at its top.

When the omniscient Lord exerts its vigor to throw away the remaining non-defiling Karmas, the thrust of that vigor continues for some moments even after Karmas are stripped off. By virtue of that thrust the soul

moves on. That movement is necessarily upward. That is the innate nature of soul. Its movement in different directions during the worldly life is due to the impact of Karma. Once that impact is removed, the soul adopts its natural upward movement and reaches the top of universe.

The scriptural texts mention four reasons for such ascent. One is continuing of the activity (Poorva Prayog) by the thrust applied earlier. This can be exemplified by a potter's wheel. The potter moves the wheel until it catches enough speed. Then he gives up, but the wheel continues to move by the motion applied to it. Another is the loss of weight. For instance, a gourd vessel covered with mud goes down the water by the weight of the mud. As the mud is removed by the impact of water, the vessel comes up. The third is castor seed. As the seed ripens, it forces itself upward out of the pod. The fourth is a flame, which always points upward.

All these examples are applicable in upward movement of the liberated soul. The impact of thrust has been explained above. Like a muddy gourd, the worldly soul was burdened with Karma. As Karma gives way, the soul becomes lighter and therefore goes upward. Like a ripened castor seed the liberated soul is ripened and hence moves upward. Like a flame, it is soul's innate nature to go upward. As the flame is fixed to the lamp, the worldly soul was fixed to the worldly order. Since it is now freed from that, it goes upward and settles at the top of universe. Since there is no Dharmāstikāy beyond that point, the movement of the soul stops at that level and it blissfully stays there forever.

That blissful state has a beginning, but no end. This concept may seem to be militating against the principle that every beginning must have an end. But the beginning has been mentioned here in the sense of full manifestation of blissful capability. The soul is inherently imbibed with bliss, but it is not manifested so long as the soul remains under the impact of Karma. Since that impact now stands removed, the inherent bliss becomes manifest. Moreover, as the bondage of Karma is not going to recur, that bliss stays forever.

Now the question would be 'Does the soul do anything in the state of liberation or does it stay inactive?' The total inactivity denotes a lifeless state. As such, if it is contended that the liberated soul does not do anything, that would be equivalent to treating it as lifeless. Consciousness is the negation of lifelessness. Since consciousness is the nature of soul that can never be given up. That denotes the property of perceiving and knowing, and the liberated soul continues to exercise that capability. The stanza therefore states that in the liberated state the soul continues to experience its infinite perception and infinite enlightenment.

20) Je Pad Shri Sarvajne Dithun Jnānamān, Kahi Shakyā Nahin Pan Te Shri Bhagvān Jo;
Teh Swaroopane Anya Vāni Te Shun Kahe? Anubhavgochar Mātra Rahun Te Jnān Jo. Apoorva.

That is the state perceived by the omniscient in their enlightenment, but which even the Lords could not state in words. What can any one else say about the state, which can only be experienced? When?

The liberated state is beyond description. Even the Lords could not fully describe it in words. The bliss of liberation is experiential and cannot be expressed in words. The words are mere Pudgal particles, which are invariably unconscious, while bliss is conscious. It is obviously not possible to express the conscious bliss in terms of lifeless Pudgal. Even the omniscient Lords in the thirteenth stage cannot adequately do that.

It is said that only an infinitesimal part of what the Lords experience is expressed in words. Such inability to express a pleasant experience is termed as 'Gungāno Gol', which means experience of sweet by a mute. If a mute tastes a sweet, he knows its relishing taste, but being a mute, he cannot express it in words. Similarly, it is not possible even for the Lords to adequately express the blissful experience of the liberated state.

Moreover, only a part of what Lords express can be held by their Ganadhars (Lords' lieutenants) and what Ganadhars express is only partly grasped by their pupils. That shows the inability of others to describe the state of liberation. The stanza therefore states that it can be known only by experience.

21) Eh Paramapadprāptinun Karyun Dhyān Mein, Gajā Vagar Ne Hāl Manorathroop Jo;

Topan Nishchay Rājchandra Manane Rahyo, Prabhuājñāe Thāshun Te Ja Swaroop Jo. Apoorva.

Rajchandraji says that he has conceived of attaining that state even though it is currently beyond the reach and hence only an aspiration; he is however, confident to reach that state by the grace of Lords. When?

The question may arise, 'Since it is not possible to relate the bliss of liberation in words, what was the purpose of composing this poem?' Shrimad states that he has simply put forth his aspiration at the feet of Lord. He is aware that presently it is beyond his capacity, but he knows that it is possible to attain such a state by contemplating about the state of Lords.

Right now, his aspiration merely amounts to an ambition. That can be realized by the grace of Lords. In fact, it is hazardous to take even one step without their grace. Lords do not of course directly give anything, but they are infinitely graceful and their grace innately flows towards all, who endeavor in the right direction. Therefore, Shrimad feels confident that by dedicating everything at the feet of the Lords, he would gain the required energy and attain the ultimate state.

CONCLUSION

Since the poem ends here, it is worth examining its contents in retrospect. One, who wants to tread on the path of great men, should first gain the right perception. Without that it is not possible to get on the path of liberation. The right perception can be gained by overcoming the perception-related delusion. Thereafter one has to endeavor for overcoming the character-related delusion. For that purpose, he needs to observe Samities and Gupties. While doing that, he also needs to endeavor for overcoming the sensual inclination as well as the instincts of anger, arrogance, deception and greed.

The next step is to cultivate equanimity so that one can remain unaffected in comfortable or uncomfortable situations. After developing it one should test it by staying in the desolate places and by observing the austerities. When one can maintain equanimity under such trying circumstances, he comes close to success in overcoming the character-related delusion. As and when that is finally done, he reaches the 12th stage of elevation, where no delusion prevails. The remaining defiling Karmas are easily destroyed at that stage and the aspirant rises to the state of omniscience. Thereafter attainment of liberation is merely a matter of time.

While composing this poem Shrimad had in mind the objective of liberation; but he knew that there were still Karmas in balance and he had to bear their consequences. This is evident from his writing during the time, when this poem was composed. In an autobiographical poem he has mentioned:-

Avashya Karmano Bhog Re Bhogavavo Avashesh Re; Tethi Deh Ek Dhārine Jāshun Swaroop Swadesh Re

There is still Karma in balance and its consequences have to be borne. As such, we shall go to the own abode (gain liberation) after taking one more birth.