

PREFACE

The soul is in constant pursuit of eternal peace...there are many roadblocks that lie ahead of it before it can reach its final destination. Most of them are quite often created by the individual himself. One such major obstacle that impedes enlightenment of the soul is building opinions about himself, others, his surroundings or any situation. This creates upheavals and misunderstandings in his life and leads to the binding of *karmas*. How can one break away from this normal human tendency and limit the binding of new *karmas* and annihilate old ones to enlighten the soul?

Pujya Gurudev Namramuni Maharaj Saheb has the answers to these questions. He advocates that in order to reach the ultimate goal, one has to take the first step by freeing oneself from the human tendency of building opinions and judging someone. So let us resolve to be dispassionate in relations, to master our mind and change our inner self and let Pujya Gurudev be our 'GUIDING LIGHT'!!

'FREEDOM FROM OPINIONS' is the first book of the series "GUIDING LIGHT" and the translated version of "ABHIPRAYO NI MUKTI APAVE AATMASIDDHI".

Experiment 1:



"Be dispassionate in relations"

Since time immemorial, the soul is in pursuit of joy. Far and wide, be it morning or evening, day or night, it is only searching for pleasure. It is always striving to gain comfort because every soul likes happiness and dislikes sorrow.

A soul's definition of bliss changes according to its assumptions and opinions. Each and every soul has always tried to gain some kind of happiness from everyone, every object and from every situation. Hence, he forms an opinion for every person, object and situation that he comes across.

A person, an object or a situation may be favorable for one person but unfavorable for another. One may like it, whereas, another may dislike it. A person's opinion is based on his likes and dislikes.



**One's expression of thoughts depends
on the opinions he has formed.**

An individual's expression, reaction and action are directed by his opinions and assumptions. One's behavior depends on the opinion he has developed for that person, object or situation.

One tends to see through the eyes of opinions and assumptions. When you form an opinion about something, it will remain set in your mind. The knots of assumptions are so strong that they fail to untie themselves, even after many years. Situations may change, but opinions do not.

A person saw Valiya, the dacoit, who robbed to earn a living to support his family and formed an image of Valiya as a robber in his mind. Later on, Valiya came into contact with saints and with their blessings, gained spiritual understanding and knowledge, and became Saint Valmiki. The same person now meets Saint Valmiki. The first thought that comes to his mind is that '**he is a robber.**'

How does his opinion manifest itself?

He ponders, "Although he is now dressed like a saint, but in the past, he was a robber."

Parmatma has said that

**one does not bind *karmas* just by observing
a person, an object or a situation.**

***Karmas* are bound when you express your opinion
for a person, an object or a situation.**

It is said that the Jain religion is a religion of "*Vitraaga Parmatma*." What is *Vitraagata* – is it a state of dispassion?



***Vitraagadasha* means a state
free of opinions, attachments and passion...!**

Our opinions create feelings within us which may be good or bad. Usually, in this present era, a person tends to have more ill feelings than good ones.

What is the mentality of people today? They get involved with their surroundings and get influenced easily...whatever they see, they tend to imbibe it, regardless of whether it is in line with their values, what they are familiar with or whether it is good or bad.

Parmatma inspires us to be like a mirror. A mirror only reflects the image of the person, be it a beauty queen or a demon. Neither does it not get involved with the image, nor changes itself, even after seeing the reflection. A true accomplice is like a mirror. He observes everything but does not get involved in anything nor does he express his opinions. He is unaffected by the change in situations. He only observes... He does not react...!

What is the meaning of *Vitraagadasha* (a dispassionate state)?

What should one do if he wants to progress on the path of spirituality? What should he do for the purification of his soul? An accomplice may have been performing physical austerities at the superficial level, but what about his inner growth?

First of all, he must become like a mirror. He must never get involved with anything, nor express his opinion about anything.

Some people are always in a good mood and are smiling all the time, whereas, some are sad, even in a happy environment. One's mind is always



affected by the presence of another person, object or situation. If he gets involved in it, he develops good or bad thoughts for them. In Jainism, these thoughts and feelings are called opinions. For infinite lives, we have developed a habit of expressing our opinions. Hence, even in this birth, we keep expressing our opinions.

“Oh! That person – he is very good natured **but** sometimes...”

What happened? You did not want to speak anything unpleasant about him, so by using the word '**but**', you criticized him and raised a doubt in other people's mind.

Parmatma says that your opinions are incomplete and biased because you can see neither the past, nor the future of anything or see the situation in its totality. Your opinion is based on what you see in the present. But remember, nothing is eternal. Neither your eyes are going to be there forever, nor are any objects seen by the eyes.

Most opinions are based on what the eye sees and what the tongue speaks.

Is this world momentary or eternal?

Is the present state of the world, as seen by our eyes, going to remain as it is till eternity or will it change the very next moment?

Whatever that is seen by the eyes at present – is it going to remain the same till eternity or is it going to change as time passes?

Parmatma says that only **the soul is eternal in this world**. Everything else is constantly changing its form.



A child becomes a youth; an adult grows old. The sun, which rose in the morning, will set in the evening. It may be raining in the morning but there may be sunshine in the afternoon. So, should the opinions that we form by observing the present be of a permanent or momentary nature?

Two people will have different opinions for the same person. In one person's view, Arjunmali is a murderer. He kills seven people every day. His opinion is that Arjunmali is a murderer. The murderer, Arjunmali goes to *Parmatma's samovasaran* and walks right up to HIM. Arjunmali is being observed by *Parmatma* as well as others in the *samovasaran*.

What opinion will *Parmatma* have for Arjunmali?

Will *Parmatma* express his view? NO...! *Parmatma* knows that this person, who is currently known as 'Arjunmali', the murderer, will in a few moments, become 'Arjunmuni', an ascetic.

Right now, he is an ordinary person, but shortly, he will become Arjun ascetic (*Angaar*).

Just as the murderer Arjunmali became Arjunmuni in a few moments, everything in this world keeps changing at every moment. What may seem bad now, can become good a moment later. That which appears to be pleasant, can become unpleasant.

When we do not know in toto, why should we become impatient and express our opinions?

The worst habit of most people is to express their opinions and give advice.



Those who want to tread on the path of *sadhana* to purify their soul must, first and foremost, give up two things – expressing opinions and giving advice.

Staunchness of opinions leads to obstinacy. *Parmatma* says obstinacy is irreligion. Obstinacy leads to conflicts and is the root cause of all clashes.

Are the family members of your present birth going to live with you forever? No...!

The people who are with you today – were they with you ten years ago? Will they be with you ten years later? NO...!

The people with whom you were in your previous birth – are they with you in this birth? NO...!

Each member of your family has come from a different place; different birth (*gati*) and taken birth at different times and coincidentally, all of you have got together here. Hence, everyone's thoughts, opinions and beliefs will be different. People with different opinions and different beliefs have, today, become members of one family, one society, hence, your thoughts and feelings are different. Your wife, your son, your daughter, your daughter-in-law – everyone's feelings, thoughts and wishes will be different. Hence, opinions will also be different.

**If there is a difference of opinion,
there will be breach in peace.**

It is important to break the heap of opinions that one has built over time immemorial before traversing the path of *sadhana* for the purification of one's soul.



Parmatma has said... Opinions are heaps of past memories which have accumulated in your mind over the years. You may perform physical austerities, recite a rosary and chant *mantras*, but until the past memories and the heaps of opinions and beliefs are not broken and erased, your *sadhana* will not be successful.

How can one stop forming opinions?

One needs to first understand that the habit of forming opinions and making assumptions is the root cause of all troubles. Until one does not comprehend that opinions are the cause of breach in peace, clashes, conflicts and trouble, unless one realizes that the cause of unhappiness is being judgmental, the reason for misery is making assumptions and the tension in the home front is due to these false opinions and assumptions, one fails to stop forming and expressing one's opinions.

If one person of the family who is the decision maker expresses his opinion for everything and if there is another person in the same family who opposes and does not accept and invariably rejects and opposes it, all hell breaks loose.

'When there is opposition, problems arise.'

These problems create misunderstandings and conflicts.

What should be done to avoid problems, misunderstandings, clashes and conflicts?

Stop forming opinions...when the mind is filled with restlessness, problems and conflicts, you will not derive peace, even if you are pious. You may try to remain in equanimity by performing *samayik*, but the problems will not let you remain in peace.



You may listen to discourses and *Parmatma's* preaching, but if your mind is burning with restlessness, the words will not calm your mind.

Hence, first cool your heart and calm your mind.

You will not gain anything by only listening to discourses. You must implement what you have heard; only then will you succeed. When you practice what you have learnt, you will feel that you have gained something; only then will you feel and experience true sense of achievement.

To stop to opine, first of all, you must realize that, “I have given my opinion, even though no one asked for it. There was no need for me to opine. The minute I express my opinion or make an assumption, I must be ready to listen to four more sentences against a single opinion of mine.”

Your son is fast asleep. You wake him up and tell him that he must go and pray. He refuses and goes back to sleep... You start expressing your opinion... “You must wake up early, get ready and go to the *upashray* to pay homage to the ascetics.” He again negates, turns away and goes back to sleep. Again, you'll try to wake him up...

“You must wake up.” What happened?

Your opinion became an insistence.

Your son will sleep peacefully but the restlessness in your mind will increase.

**Opinions can lead to obstinacy,
which results in breach of peace.**



What should one do to stop one's opinions from turning into obstinacy?

First, experiment... First, conjecture... First, resolve...

'I will not interfere in anyone's life.'

To carry out this experiment, you will have to reduce your contacts with people. Gradually, reduce your circle of contacts and make it so small that it is limited only to your immediate kins.

First conjecture – “I will not express my opinion to anyone.”

Most people have a habit... when they go to the market and see new fruits and vegetables, immediately, they will call others and inform them... “Today, I saw mangoes in the market. The first mangoes of the season... they were very expensive but nice... the vegetables were also very fresh.” Now, on hearing this from you, if that person goes to the market and buys mangoes and vegetables and cuts them, who binds the sin of cutting the mangoes?

You were passing by and heard two sisters-in-law arguing with each other. You immediately start forming opinions and making assumptions about their dispute. You pass this piece of information to many others. Soon after, the sisters-in-law come to an agreement, calm down and after an hour or so, even have lunch together. But you passed on the gossip about their arguments and created a thought of hatred and dislike in others' minds. Thus, you bound many more *karmas* than what the sisters-in-law would have bound because of their quarrel.

Keep reciting, “I do not want to opine about any person, object or situation and to achieve this, I need to reduce my relationship with people.”



**'The lesser the relationship with people,
the greater the awakening of our soul.
The greater the awakening of the soul,
the alertness of the soul increases.
As the alertness of the soul increases,
the soul experiences eternal bliss.'**

“I do not want to be involved with outsiders.”

Speak less and give fewer opinions. *Parmatma* has called it 'exemption from speech.' It does not mean don't talk; just talk only as much as is required, nothing more.

Most of the time, people have this unhealthy habit of interfering and giving opinions when two people are talking, even when they do not have any understanding about the conversation. They cannot resist the temptation to express their opinions, even though they are not asked for. If one cannot resist the temptation, then, one must stay away from such situations.

Secondly, do not make telephone calls unless required. Often, conversations on the phone are trivial in nature... most of the time, the conversation is about other people... sometimes good and sometimes bad... likes and dislikes of others... This results in the binding of *karmas*.

Vitraag Parmatma observes everything and is aware of everything, yet HE does not get involved. HE will not opine about anyone, HE does not even think of giving an opinion.

One may think – it is easy not to opine - but NO! It is very difficult. It is very difficult to erase the predispositions in our memory. It may be easy to fast



for thirty days, but it is very difficult to make a conjecture to not express our opinions and follow it through.

From childhood, we have been taught the *Namaskar Mantra*, to undergo physical austerities and to listen to discourses, but we have not been taught to abstain from expressing our opinions about others.

Our religion repeatedly gives us only one inspiration – 'wherever you are, pay attention and focus only on improving yourself, not on advising others.'

“Until today, I have always opined about people, objects and situations, but now, I only want to pay attention to myself. I want to come under *Parmatma's* influence, stop expressing my opinions and become dispassionate and peaceful. I will implement this from now on.”

**The soul of one, who stops to opine; becomes pure.
Only a pure soul can progress along *Parmatma's* path.**

Step forward; make a resolution – “I want to stop forming opinions. I will not have feelings of like or dislike for anyone and will not have any preconceived notions for any person or object. Everything is acceptable to me as it is, how it is and where it is.”

Let's begin this first experiment of becoming free from forming opinions about people, objects and situations.



Experiment 2:



“Master your mind.”

Which are the most useful things for a person in his daily life? His mind, speech and body.

These three are of utmost importance.

They are the cause of happiness. They are the cause of binding *karmas* and they also give freedom from *karmas*. That, which binds *karmas*, also annihilates them.

That, which does not bind, cannot annihilate.

Freedom from Opinions



***Parmatma* says that whatever comes will surely go.**

Those who bind *karmas* will have to suffer. Those who do not bind *karmas* do not have to suffer. The Jain philosophy believes that the functioning of the entire world is dependent on mind, speech and body. Which one of these three is the most active?

The mind performs the maximum activities, followed by speech, and then, the body. The physical activities of the body are visible, but its speed is much slower compared to that of the mind whose activities are invisible. The speed of mental activity is invisible, but is surely faster than the body.

Mind, body and speech of the three which is the best and worst in relation to the Jain philosophy of *karmas*?

The mind is the best, as well as, the worst.

Hence, *Parmatma* says that you should learn to control your mind. Learn to command your mind, then, you will not have to wander in this world.

One who learns to command his mind does not encounter any problems in life. But we know best how to command our body...we take it in the direction we want...we can make the body work as we may wish...but the mind...? It sometimes listens to us and at other times, it does not. Hence, we need to control our mind.

The mind is the cause of one being opinionated. Opinions are based on the thoughts in one's mind...being opinionated is the root cause of the wandering of one's soul in this world.

Opinions may be right or wrong.



There's happiness and sorrow in opinions. An opinion based on the feelings in our mind can bind *karmas* or can annihilate *karmas*.

Shree Bhagwati Sutra elicits a very thought provoking example of the power of our thoughts. There are many different species of fish in the vast ocean... some small, some big, some tiny, some huge like a whale... small fishes have a small body and hence, require less amount of food, whereas, big fish have a big body and require large amounts of food. Those who eat more commit more sins than those who eat less.

Parmatma says that the mind is capable of changing any situation.

A huge fish, when hungry, opens its big mouth and engulfs many small fishes in it. However, it usually immediately opens its mouth again and some fortunate fishes escape and swim away in the ocean. This is a daily routine that occurs many times in a day. A small fish observes this scene and laughs at the big fish.

'One's mind is always opinionated.'

It thinks, "This big fish is a fool. Every time it opens its mouth, fishes escape out. If I were in its place, I would not let a single fish escape. I would eat them all."

'Those who think of others as fools are themselves foolish.'

Try and understand the moral of the story. If we think deeply, we will be able to understand the actual message of this story.

Was it necessary for the small fish to opine what the big fish should do? If the small fish was able to talk, it would give advice to the big fish, "You are



foolish. You do not realize that when you open your mouth, so many small fishes escape. You should keep your teeth clamped together and eat all the fishes you have caught."

If the small fish expresses its opinion and advice, will the big fish welcome this advice?

It is our nature, since time immemorial, to give advice, in spite of others not willing to listen to it.

Only he, who can control his mind, can digest its opinions.

**Only he, who has mastered his mind,
can store the opinions in his inner self.**

What will the one who cannot control his mind do? He will, in an instant, express his opinion and views.

The big fish eats many small fishes during its lifetime, whereas, the small fish may just eat one fish in its entire life. After death, where do both of them go?

The big fish, which has taken many lives and eaten innumerable small fishes, goes to the first hell and gets a punishment for 10,000 years. The small fish, which has hardly eaten anything, goes to the seventh hell and gets a punishment for millions of years.

Why? Is it only because of the mind? No!!! Not only because of being opinionated but also because of the affection and hatred attached to it. The ill thought of eating them all; the thought of greed overpowered the action of actually doing it.



Various incidents occur in every person's life. If he is alert and can control his mind, he can save himself from binding sinful *karmas*.

Opinions are formed by the animate (soul) and because of the animate (soul). The inanimate (mind) cannot form opinions. The opinions formed and expressed by the animate (soul) decide its future.

A saint is standing in deep meditation outside *Parmatma* Mahavir's *samovasaran*. A king passes by, sees the saint, bows to him, goes to the *samovasaran* and asks *Parmatma* Mahavir, "O Lord! A saint is standing outside in deep meditation. He looks very peaceful and must be a great saint. If he dies at this moment, where will he be born? *Parmatma* replies, "If Prasannachandra Muni, who is standing outside in deep meditation, dies at this moment, he will take birth in the seventh hell."

The king wonders – the one who is engrossed in deep meditation, who is neither affected by any person or object around him, nor by any situation around him...who is not talking with anyone... such a person will go to the seventh hell...??

All our opinions are incomplete...

You do not know anyone completely; you do not know him 100 percent, hence, think a hundred times before talking about anyone.

People have the habit of talking anything about anyone without knowing the actual facts. "This person is so foolish... she is wealthy but..." How well do you know them? Can you read their minds? Have you ever read your inner self?

If a saint who is meditating with closed eyes can go to the seventh hell,



and the big fish that eats thousands of small fishes everyday goes to the first hell, then, how can opinions be formed based on what we see?

We cannot read anyone's mind nor can we know their thoughts; hence, we should not express our opinions about them. When we have never tried to read our inner self, then, how can we read the minds of other people?

King Shrenik bowed to the saint standing outside the *samovasaran* and had a feeling of gratitude on seeing the saint's *sadhana*. Shortly thereafter, *Parmatma* Mahavir told him that if the saint dies at this moment, he would take birth in the seventh hell. On hearing this, King Shrenik was taken aback. "What am I hearing?"

The saint was a king before he renounced the world. He appointed his son as his successor, handed over the kingdom to him, told everyone in the kingdom to take care of his son and then, renounced the world to walk on the path of self-control.

He was meditating when he heard people say, "This is the king who handed over the kingdom to his young son and renounced the world. He does not know that leaders of his army are going to deceive his son and take the reins of the kingdom in their control."

The saint, on hearing this, begins to think... until today, he had felt that the leaders were good and noble; hence, he entrusted his kingdom to them. But now, his opinion for them changed.

Ears create the maximum clashes for us. A few right or wrong words fall on our ears and our opinions change.

Parmatma says, you must forget the past, remove it from your inner-self



and discard it, otherwise, even if you get the best in this life, it will mix with the old accumulated dirt and get polluted. Hence, before beginning *sadhana*, you must confess to your Guru. “Gurudev, I have committed these mistakes, I have committed these sins, but now, to move ahead on the path of spirituality, I want to purify myself.”

**Only when sins committed in the past
are confessed and erased,
the soul becomes pure.**

To purify your soul, first, you will have to change your thoughts and opinions. Also, you will have to remain composed when another person is expressing his opinion.

The saint had a good opinion of his leaders. He was confident that they would take care of his son and the kingdom, but upon hearing what others said, his opinion changed. He could no longer remain calm and hence, became restless. His inner peace was breached. His *sadhana* was disturbed.

The mind began to think... “I will approach the leaders right now and kill them in one stroke of the sword.” His mind became a whirlpool of destructive, wicked thoughts. So many different thoughts and opinions erupted in his mind. He slipped into the past, to the time when he was the king and raised his hand to touch his crown, but alas... he was bald. Instead of the crown, he felt his bald head, regained his senses and came back to the present.

He remembered he had renounced the world and began wandering, “Everyone has to bear the fruits of his own *karmas* – I have no attachment or hatred for anyone.” As these thoughts arose in his mind, he began to repent. “I have renounced the world and I got such negative and destructive thoughts?”



In these thoughts of severe repentance, his heart got cleansed and his soul became pure.

At the *samovasaran*, King Shrenik again asks Lord... “O Lord! At this moment, where will he take birth (*gati*)?” And Lord Mahavir replies, “He will go to heaven (*devlok*) – as his repentance increases, his *gati* also changes.” And just as *Parmatma* is saying that if he dies at this moment, he will go to '*Swarth Siddh Viman*', the saint attains omniscience and true faith...!

Reflect! Think! The soul which was going to the seventh hell, in a fraction of a second, attains omniscience, all because of the thoughts in his mind. His soul becomes an omniscient soul.

**Just by control or lack of control of the mind,
one can go to heaven or hell.**

Thus, I want to master my mind. If I am in command of my mind, I can control it and take it onto the path I desire. I can apply my mind on the right path and will be able to purify my soul. To purify my soul, I must surely try this experiment.

One good thought can lead you to liberation, whereas, one bad opinion can take you to hell.

Hence, let's purify the soul and proceed towards omniscience by increasing the right opinions and reducing the wrong ones.



Experiment 3:



“Change your inner self”

Every person in this world has a different viewpoint and a different perspective of looking at other people, objects or events.

The world keeps changing. Today's world is not the same as it was yesterday and it will not be the same tomorrow. One's thoughts and feelings at any moment of the day are not the same; they keep changing.

In this ever changing world, even we change at every moment. We will not have the same thoughts as we did five years ago. Our feelings today are different than the feelings we had ten or twenty years ago. Everything keeps changing.

Let's decide to change ourselves, our thoughts and beliefs with changing

Freedom from Opinions...



times. Also, let's resolve not to interfere in the life of others and form opinions about them.

I may form a 'not-so-good' opinion of somebody considering his present situation, but *Parmatma* says that a person who is bad today can become a gentleman tomorrow – an angry person can become calm and composed upon coming in contact with a saint.

Then, will your impression about that person still hold good or will it change?

In this ever changing world, we should not form opinions and develop attachment or hatred for anyone.

But our drawback is that, no sooner we meet people, we start forming opinions about them. This school is good, it has good teachers but... this boy is so dumb... that girl is different... and it goes on and on... whether the opinion is good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, we always make it a point to express it. We have not been asked about our opinion or a stamp of approval, yet we give our unwanted opinion and certification. Others are not interested in our opinions nor do they give any importance to them, but we cannot abstain from expressing ourselves.

“This isn't good... that could have been better... only if he had done this! He should not do this... it was done properly... this is not right...” – these are examples of interfering.

To stop interfering in others' lives, we must change our nature. “I will change my nature and stop interfering in others' lives.” For many births, it has been in our nature to interfere and express our opinions.

If you understand this well and if it touches your heart, then, the number



of *karmas* that you bind will reduce by 50%. Your sins and sinful activities will become less and there will be more peace in your life.

Even within a family, various family members keep giving opinions... “You should do this... this is appropriate for you... you must take science... you must become a doctor, etc.” Do people ever think about what the other person desires?

We should give our grown up children the independence to live as per their wishes and not interfere in their lives.

If we change ourselves, there will be peace all around.

Until we change the inclination of our mind, we will not be able to change our inner self.

Observing penance and performing religious discipline will bear no fruit until there is change in the inclination of the mind.

For purification of the inner self and to progress on the path of omniscience, you must first change your nature and stop interfering in others' lives. One who wishes to change his life, improve himself, and have peace in his life, must resolve that, “I will not express my opinion about anything to anyone.”

All your opinions are based on present circumstances and hence, they are momentary. Then, why should you feel attachment or hatred and bind *karmas* by expressing your opinions?

A wealthy and reputed merchant held a high position in the society and was respected by everyone. He had a big group of friends and one of his friend's son was getting married. Invitation cards were printed and delivered to all his



friends. The friend also gave a personal invitation to everyone to attend the wedding.

Only three days were left for the wedding, but the merchant had yet not received the invitation. Everyone in town was talking about the wedding. A trader friend went to the merchant's house for some work, and he too mentioned about attending the wedding on the approaching Sunday...

What reply would the merchant give? Although a very good friend, he had not yet received the invitation. The merchant expressed his opinion... “That person is not worthy... it's neither worth talking about him... nor attending a function at his place...” The trader quietly listened to the merchant, finished his work and left.

Why did the reputed merchant speak ill about his close friend? Because, everyone except the merchant had received the invitation. This made the merchant furious and hurt his ego.

That very evening, the close friend personally came to the merchant's house to give the invitation card. He told the merchant that due to lack of time, the invitation cards were couriered to everyone; however, since the reputed merchant was a special friend, he had come personally to give the invitation.

The merchant greeted him, offered him tea and snacks and also offered to help for the wedding. Immediately, the merchant's opinion changed. His friend was now, a good man.

The merchant dressed in his best clothes went to the wedding. He was actively taking care of everything as though his brother's son was getting married. Just then he spotted the trader whom he had given a bad opinion about his friend.



He rushed towards him, took him aside and told him, “This person is very good, noble and caring. He had so many guests at his house and a lot of work, yet, he personally came to my house to give me the invitation. He treats me as his elder brother. Forget what I told you about him two days ago.”

Until he had not received the invitation, his ego was not satisfied and hence, his opinion for his friend was different. Once the invitation was received and his ego was satisfied, his opinion changed.

This happens with everyone – young or old.

***Parmatma* says all your opinions are incomplete, instantaneous and momentary ... most of the time, they are valueless.**

In a span of three days, the merchant expressed two different opinions to the trader about his friend.

What is the value of opinions, which change at every moment?

Hence, instead of changing opinions, “I must change myself. I must not express my opinions about anyone.”

Why express opinions which are valueless?

It has become our habit to express our opinions about everything.

Listening to opinions is also a bad habit.

When you make something new, or take up a new activity, immediately, you will talk about it to others. Why? Is it because you want to hear good and positive opinions about yourself from others? You are eager to hear their praises.

Now, if an expert pinpoints a fault in your work, then???



What happens if you are given an opinion which is not up to your expectation??

Will you still remain calm or will you get angry?

A devotee who has attained true knowledge and who worships *Parmatma* will remain calm, accept his mistake and try to rectify it. An ordinary person, however, will get frustrated and comment on the person who points out his mistake, “Is he knowledgeable enough to find faults in others? His ego is at its peak because of his knowledge.”

An ordinary person gets frustrated upon hearing negative opinions from others whereas a knowledgeable man remains calm and composed regardless of any opinion expressed about him.

When you hear from others that someone was chatting about your son and your nature, immediately, your mind becomes active and you begin to think, “He has the nerve to say such a thing about me? Is my nature like that? Let me meet that person – I will show him my true nature. He is defacing my son, but is he aware of the pranks his son has played?”

Parmatma says:

**Only those who have defects will try
to cover them with clarifications.
One who has not done anything wrong
does not need to clarify anything.**

When you start giving importance to others' opinions, all the wrong things begin to creep into you – wrong thoughts and vices start developing.

Elders and grownups are able to ignore others' opinions because of their



experience, but youngsters and children become upset upon hearing negative opinions about them; some even go into depression. They isolate themselves and do not talk to or meet anyone. They lock themselves in a room and get engrossed in negative thoughts.

Parmatma has said that validations from others are incomplete because they do not have a comprehensive, clear vision, nor do they know the future. Their opinions are based on what others have heard & seen and told them. They themselves are not aware of the happenings. Hence, one should not be perturbed by what others think, say or believe.

You must always be aware that, “I am a soul.” The body is different from the soul, then, why should I get upset?

Neither should I express opinions about others, nor should I listen to others' opinions. Some people may praise you to make you feel good, but, you should know how true it is! A knowledgeable person will not praise anyone, because he is aware of the true nature of the person.

Parmatma says that validation by an incomplete person is valueless, hence, one should not get upset upon hearing praises or criticism from others. He, who does not care about the world, is an accomplice. He, who worries about the opinion of others, is always upset.

One should never worry about anyone. One who serves Dev and Guru is always composed, whereas, one who worries about the world is always anxious; he apprehends, “What will others think? What will they say?” He who is engrossed in such worldly thoughts can never progress on *Parmatma's* path.

There are many accomplices who have reached a high level of *sadhana* but become upset and anxious upon hearing something bad about them. Why?



Parmatma says, only one who is committing sins, doing wrong deeds and is guilty, should be afraid. One who has a clean heart should not worry about the world.

One who is worried about others' opinions can never care for his soul. *Parmatma's* divine sermons were creating a pious feeling in everyone's heart. *Parmatma's* discourse was touching the heart of one and all. People were deeply engrossed, so much so, that they did not realize how quickly the time was passing by. It was evening and the sun had set. Suddenly, a *sadhaviji* (female ascetic) looked around her and realized that all the other *sadhavijis* had left; she was the only one sitting in the *samovasaran*. She was so engrossed in *Parmatma's* discourse that she lost track of time.

A true listener is one who is unaware of what is happening around him; one who is attentive of what is happening around him is not a true listener.

The *sadhaviji* was distressed. Immediately, she left and went back to her Guru. As she entered the *upashraya*, she saw her Guru waiting at the entrance. *Sadhavi* Mrugavati fell at the feet of her Guru Chandanbala. Guru Chandanbala said, “Are you not aware that a *sadhavi* cannot stay out after sunset. You should be aware of the time.” Mrugavati was so engrossed in listening to *Parmatma's* preaching that she had not realized it was evening and the sun had set.

But, “Don't you realize what time it is?” were the harsh words that pierced her heart.

It was a mistake which was not committed intentionally; it had happened inadvertently.



The strong and harsh words of her Guru hit her ears like thunder. But Mrugavati was a dedicated ascetic, so, she remained quiet.

When one is devoted to his Guru, one does not argue.

It was Mrugavati's mistake. Her Guru was angry and said, "Aren't you aware of the time?"

What would Mrugavati reply?

What would be the reaction of a dedicated saint?

What feelings would she have for her angry Guru?

Mrugavati very softly and humbly said, "O Guru! I lost track of time. I have committed a big mistake. Please forgive me and my mistake and give me repentance."

One who is devoted never opposes, never argues and does not become sad. He accepts his mistake.

It is our nature that we are flattered when someone praises us, talks good about us and gives good opinions. But if someone speaks adversely about us, we are disappointed.

Mrugavati was neither unhappy nor disappointed.

At that moment, feelings of exceptional devotion and worship arose within her. It is mentioned in the Aagam that these pious feelings of worship and devotion annihilates all her *karmas* and at that instance, she attained omniscient knowledge and right faith.

What if she had become unhappy and disappointed?



What if she had been hurt by her Guru's words?

Then, would she have attained the right knowledge and right faith?

Hence, one should decide to shorten his field of relations, become the master of his mind and try to change oneself from within.

"I will ignore any opinions expressed about me.

I will not express any opinions about anyone

I want to learn to accept my faults."

Check yourself-----

If your mind becomes restless upon hearing opinions of others, it implies that you are still an ordinary person.

Whereas, if you can remain calm, regardless of what others say, it implies that you are on the path of becoming *Paramatma*'s true disciple.

The sinful karmas,

**bound via thoughts upon hearing what others say,
are much more than those bound by the 18 types of sins
like stealing, lying, possessiveness, violence, etc.**

"I want to begin this experiment right now.

Neither will I express my opinions,

nor will I pay attention to the opinions of others."

